

# SIGHT AND SOUND

*The Film  
Quarterly*



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## offer BRIEF POINTERS TO CURRENT FILMS

*This list has been compiled for us by the staff of SIGHT AND SOUND and we*

*hope it may serve as a useful general guide to the principal films now in British cinemas*

**AAN (Film Locations).** All-Indian-singing-dancing-fighting-feuding-racketing-colour extravaganza : a primitive and richly unique curio (Nimmi, Dilip Kumar : director, Mehboob.)

**AFFAIR IN TRINIDAD (Columbia).** Rita Hayworth returns in tatty spy thriller : fun for fans. (Glenn Ford : director, Vincent Sherman.)

**ANNA (Archway).** Silvana Mangano as a nun in novelettish (dubbed) Italian drama. (Raf Vallone : director, Alberto Lattuada.)

**CAGE AUX FILLES, La (Regent).** Good performance by Daniele Delorme amidst routine French girls' reformatory junketings. (Director, Maurice Cloche.)

**CAROLINE CHERIE (Films de France).** Or, What the Censor Saw. Cleavage, Louis XV beds and the French revolution in France's *Forever Amber*. (Martine Carol, Jacques Dacqumine : director, Richard Pottier.)

**CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY (British Lion).** Sincere, interesting, but rather wooden story of racial tensions in South Africa. (Canada Lee, Sidney Poitier : director, Zoltan Korda.)

**DEDEE (G.C.T.).** Low life, love and violence in darkest Antwerp : efficient, conventional. (Simone Signoret, Marcel Pagliero, Dalio : director, Yves Allegret.)

**DREAMBOAT (Fox).** Slapdash comedy about college professor's efforts to live down his past as a Valentinoish film star. Some good cracks at television and silent films. (Clifton Webb, Ginger Rogers : director, Claude Binyon.)

**HISTOIRE D'AMOUR (Films de France).** Jouvet's last film : a fine performance in a restrained tearjerker. (Daniel Gelin, Dany Robin : director, Guy Lefranc.)

**INCONNUS DANS LA MAISON, Les (G.C.T.).** Quite interesting melodrama about pathological adolescents, scripted by Clouzot from Simenon story. (Raimu : director, Henri Decoin.)

**IT GROWS ON TREES (G.F.D.).** Energetic whimsy about housewife's discovery of money-growing trees in the back garden. (Irene Dunne, Dean Jagger : director, Arthur Lubin.)

**JUMPING JACKS (Paramount).** Jerry Lewis becomes a paratrooper : quite amusing, with some good acts. (Dean Martin : director, Norman Taurog.)

**JUST FOR YOU (Paramount).** Sentimental, rather embarrassingly plotted comedy with musical numbers. (Bing Crosby, Jane Wyman, Ethel Barrymore : director, Eliot Nugent.)

**KONTIKI (R.K.O.).** Thor Heyerdahl's remarkable film record of his Peru-Polynesia journey on a raft. Much interesting material.

**LOVELY TO LOOK AT (M.G.M.).** Remake of *Roberta* ; Jerome Kern tunes, unimaginative staging, pleasant dancing from Ann Miller and the Champions, (Howard Keel, Red Skelton, Kathryn Grayson : director, Mervyn LeRoy.)

**LURE OF THE WILDERNESS (Fox).** Remake of Renoir's *Swamp Water*, fairly bogged down in convention. (Jean Peters, Jeffrey Hunter, Walter Brennan : director, Jean Negulesco.)

**MEET ME TONIGHT (G.F.D.).** Talkative, stagey version of three rather shopworn playlets from Coward's *Tonight at 8.30*. Technicolor. (Valerie Hobson, Nigel Patrick, Stanley Holloway, Kay Walsh : director, Anthony Pelissier.)

**MISERABLES, Les (Fox).** Heavy and jaded version of Hugo's interminably filmed novel. (Michael Rennie, Robert Newton, Debra Paget : director, Lewis Milestone.)

**MONKEY BUSINESS (Fox).** Quite entertaining, Hecht-scripted comedy of scientist who discovers elixir of youth. (Cary Grant, Ginger Rogers, Charles Coburn : director, Howard Hawks.)

**MY WIFE'S BEST FRIEND (Fox).** Anne Baxter clever in comedy with moments, about a jealous wife with a flair for dramatisation. (Macdonald Carey : director, Richard Sale.)

**OBJECTIVE, BURMA! (Warner).** 1945 Reissue. American parachutists led by Errol Flynn blow up Japanese radar during the Burma war : crude stuff. (Director : Raoul Walsh.)

**\*PAT AND MIKE (M.G.M.).** A Runyonesque sports promoter manages a woman athlete. Thoroughly enjoyable Hepburn-Tracy vehicle. (Aldo Ray : director, George Cukor.)

**PLANTER'S WIFE, The (G.F.D.).** An English planter and his family threatened by Malayan terrorists : conventional melodrama and domestic crises. (Claudette Colbert, Jack Hawkins : director, Ken Annakin.)

**QUO VADIS (M.G.M.).** A long Lay of Ancient Rome : big and beastly. (Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr : director, Mervyn LeRoy.)

**ROOM FOR ONE MORE (Warner).** Comedy about regeneration of difficult children by adoption into real American family. Good-humoured but too cosy. Cary Grant excellent. (Betsy Drake : director, Norman Taurog.)

**SCARAMOUCHE (M.G.M.).** Lavish Technicolor swashbuckler : moments of self-parody, but on the whole unrewarding. (Stewart Granger, Eleanor Parker, Mel Ferrer : director, George Sidney.)

**STORY OF WILL ROGERS (Warner).** Rambling, overlong biography of American folk hero. (Will Rogers Jnr., Jane Wyman : director, Michael Curtiz.)

**SUDDEN FEAR (R.K.O.).** The Crawford suffers as only she can, threatened this time by homicidal husband. Rather splendid. (Jack Palance : director, David Miller.)

**24 HOURS OF A WOMAN'S LIFE (A.B. Pathe).** Widow attempts to reform young gambler in South of France. Solemn sob-stuff. (Merle Oberon, Richard Todd : director, Victor Saville.)

**VENETIAN BIRD, The (G.F.D.).** Mildly exciting spy thriller with Venetian locations. (Richard Todd, Eva Bartok : director, Terence Fisher.)

**WHERE'S CHARLEY (Warner).** Ray Bolger in *Charley's Aunt*, with music ; the old warhorse keeps going. (Allyn McLerie : director, David Butler.)

**WORLD IN HIS ARMS, The (G.F.D.).** Seal-poacher Gregory Peck loves Russian countess Ann Blyth on the run in Alaska during the 1860's. Implausible. (Director, Raoul Walsh.)

*(Films reviewed in this issue of SIGHT AND SOUND are not included in the Film Guide.)*

*Those marked with an asterisk are especially recommended.*



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# SIGHT AND SOUND

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EALING STUDIOS for Mandy.  
J. ARTHUR RANK ORGANISATION for The Long Memory  
A.B.F.D. for The Brave Don't Cry.

LONDON FILMS for The Sound Barrier, Tora-No-O.

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for Story of Three Loves, Pat and Mike.

COLUMBIA for Death of a Salesman, The Marrying Kind, Rooty Toot Toot.

PARAMOUNT for Morocco, Devil is a Woman, Scarlet Empress, Dishonoured  
R.K.O. RADIO for I Want You, Best Years of Our Lives, Our Very Own.

20TH CENTURY-FOX for Full House, Pin-Up Girl.

UNITED ARTISTS for Red Planet Mars.

WARNER BROS. for King Vidor portrait.

FILMS DE FRANCE for Casque d'Or.

FRANCO-LONDON FILMS for Belles de Nuit.

FILMS GAUMONT for Sept Peches Capitaux.

SILVER FILMS for Jeux Interdits.

PANARIA FILMS for The Golden Coach.

UNIVERSALCINE for Due Solde di Speranza.

DE SICA PRODUCTIONS for Miracolo a Milano, Umberto D.

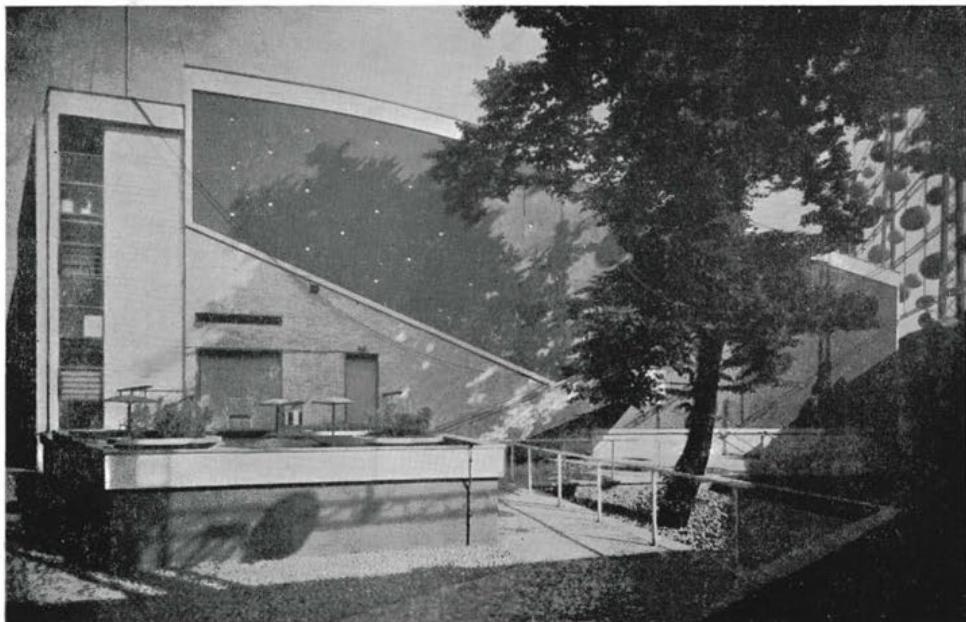
FOTO P. RONALD for Bellissima.

REGENT FILMS for Il Citta si Difende.

MINERVA FILMS for Il Cristo Proibito.

TERRA FILM for Firebird.

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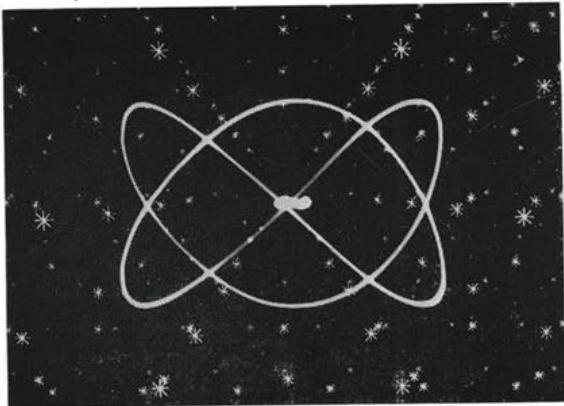
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See daily press announcements for current  
programme



# The Front Page

## The National Film Theatre

With the opening of the Telecinema as the National Film Theatre on October 23rd, a new opportunity arises for many London filmgoers. The London public is, of course, already well served for cinemas; current British and American releases, and a good selection of foreign ones, are always available, and the film societies provide programmes of more specialised interest. All the same, various important gaps remain—for the ordinary filmgoer, the technician, the specialist—and it is these which the National Film Theatre aims to fill.

The cinema will be open to all members and associates of the British Film Institute, (Associateship costs 5/- a year). Overleaf can be found a detailed guide to the programmes for the rest of 1952. It lists such diverse presentations as revivals of René Clair's most famous films, a special compilation of great personalities in the history of the cinema, an extended version of the National Film Library's present repertory cycle of classics, a revival of the famous Shavian screen adaptation, *Pygmalion*, and presentations of stereoscopic and experimental work. The guide, in fact, may be taken as a forecast of the broad policy aimed at—the provision of a centre in London where for the first time filmgoers can see the varied achievements of the cinema, past and present, in a planned review.

Some may choose only items of particular interest to them—a rare revival, perhaps, or a stereoscopic film. The enthusiast will be able, if he has the time, money and energy—which enthusiasts usually have—to see in one week *Sous les Toits de Paris*, *Le Voyage Imaginaire*, *Broken Blossoms*, a new film by Sucksdorff and an experiment in three dimensions by Norman McLaren. Prices are exceptionally low, ranging from 2/- to 4/-.



The cinema itself, which showed over 1,500 performances during the 1951 Festival of Britain, is already known to half a million people. It is beautifully designed, seats 400, and has fine modern equipment. Now that the British Film Institute has acquired it for the wider purpose of a National Film Theatre—and we must all be grateful for the support and co-operation of the film industry in this country, who by voting a grant from the British Film Production Fund made this possible—it will surely become a permanent rendezvous for everyone interested in the cinema; and, equally important, national recognition is conferred on films as an art in their own right. Painting, music, the theatre and literature have long had nationally endowed showplaces. The cinema now joins their company.



Première programme: "Pygmalion," Jean Cadell, Werdy Hiller.



Experiment: "Muscle Beach".



50 Years of Film: "Greed".

## The Telecinema

### NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

Programmes For  
October-December 1952

#### WORLD CINEMA

(Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Open to Members and Associates of the British Film Institute. Annual associate subscription : 5/-.)

World Cinema, which will run four days of each week, is a title to cover many things: presentation of the work of a single famous director, of great stars, of films—comedies, westerns, musicals, dramas—grouped round a theme or style.



World cinema, René Clair: "Sous les Toits de Paris".

#### FIFTY YEARS OF FILM

(Friday only. Open to Members and Associates.)

A panoramic history of the cinema. Weekly showings of film classics from the National Film Library, arranged mainly in chronological order, with the whole history of the film covered in 12 months.

November 14 : Special introductory programme  
SQUIB WINS THE CALCUTTA SWEEP.

November 21 :  
BEGINNINGS OF CINEMA : Lumière, Méliès, Hepworth, Griffith.

November 28 : INTOLERANCE.

December 5 : TRUE HEART SUSIE.

December 12 : BROKEN BLOSSOMS.

December 19 : THE GIRL WHO STAYED AT HOME

December 26 : Chaplin

MABEL'S BUSY DAY: TANGO TANGLE:  
NEW JANITOR: THE CHAMPION:  
HIS TRYSTING PLACE.

## SPECIAL PREMIERE PROGRAMME

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A programme designed to telescope into one evening the various points of view from which this whole series will be compiled: a historical review of personalities, a famous British feature film based on a Shaw play, experimental and stereoscopic work.

October 24—November 8:

PYGMALION (Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard).

PERSONALITY REVIEW (Garbo; Chaplin; Keaton; Stroheim, Dietrich; Olivier; Laughton; Pickford; Veidt, etc.).

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## World Cinema 1—RENE CLAIR

Six of the best films of this notable director, grouped in double feature programmes.

November 9—12, 16—19.

LE MILLION. LES DEUX TIMIDES.

November 23—26, November 30—December 3:

SOUS LES TOITS DE PARIS.

LE VOYAGE IMAGINAIRE.

December 7—10, 14—17:

A NOUS LA LIBERTE.

THE GHOST GOES WEST



World cinema, René Clair: "Les Deux Timides".

## EXPERIMENTAL

(Saturday, and daily lunchtime programmes. Open to the General Public.)

Programmes selected to reflect experiment in all its aspects—stereoscopy, amateur, cartoon and documentary films.

November 15—29:

STEREOSCOPIC FILMS. COLOUR BOX.

MIRROR OF HOLLAND.

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December 6—20:

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STEREOSCOPIC FILMS. MUSCLE BEACH.

PACIFIC 231.

## MEMBERS' NIGHTS

(Thursday only. A series of 25 programmes for Members of the Institute who subscribe specially.)

Private screenings of outstanding new films, introduced in some cases by the people who made them. Also a selection of shorts. Details of these programmes will be circulated in advance to Members.



50 Years of Film: Chaplin in "The Champion".



World Cinema: Welles' "Citizen Kane".



50 Years of Film: "Rescued from an Eagle's Nest".

## IN THE PICTURE

### I Wuz Robbed!

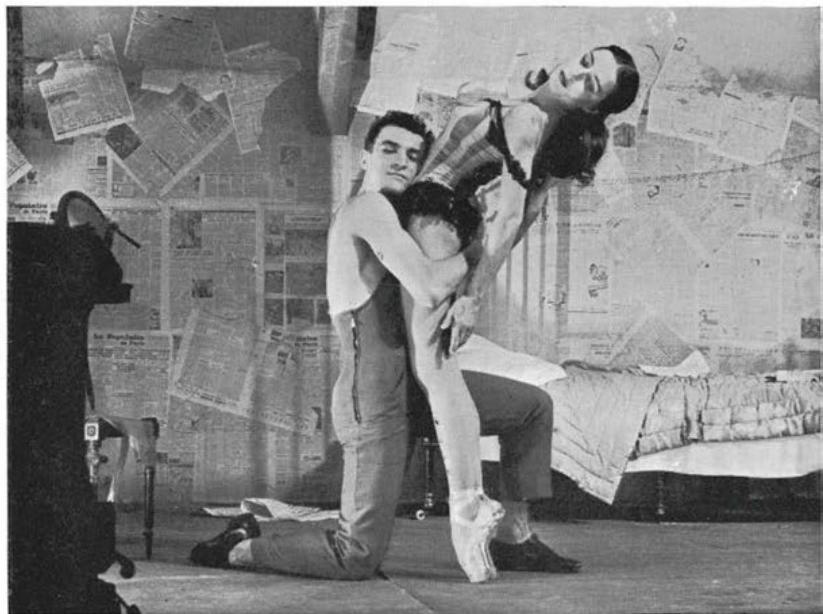
Beneath its urbane surface the *New Yorker*, on occasion, packs a considerable punch. In her recent series of articles on the filming of *The Red Badge of Courage* Lillian Ross, who wrote the magazine's famous profile of Hemingway, has made the most of what—through the conflict between Louis B. Mayer and Dore Schary as to the making of the film, and the later efforts to tailor the result to box-office demands—became something of a Hollywood *cause célèbre*. A clever, malicious and fascinating piece of reporting, the series (with some additional material) will be published here by Gollancz early next year and will be reviewed then in SIGHT AND SOUND.

Hollywood and M.G.M. (whose assistance to a writer not noted for kindness itself surprises) seem hurt and surprised by the articles, but game. *Red Badge*, put on for the occasion at three specialised cinemas in New York, did poor business; Dore Schary, according to a *Hollywood Reporter* columnist, has said "She assured me that the Hemingway profile had taught her a lesson and she was now a reformed character . . . I fell for what I honestly thought was her sincerity. And in the words of Durante 'I wuz robbed'"; and the determination to grin and bear it is shown in a *Variety* note that "John Huston plans to film the story of his life at Metro based on the series. All the characters can play themselves, including Mrs. Reinhardt's dog Mocha."

### International Set-Ups

Our Paris correspondent, FRANCIS KOVAL, writes: International set-ups seem to be the order of the day in French films. Perhaps the most interesting current project is Marcel Carné's new version of *Thérèse Raquin*, scripted by Charles Spaak. Carné, of course, worked as assistant director on Jacques Feyder's silent version of the Emile Zola story, with Gina Manès. But he says: "As it happens, I have never seen it, and now, of course, I don't want to see it. Although, frankly, I don't think it would influence me, as I have very definite ideas on the story, which is being set in modern times." The leading players are Simone Signoret and Raf Vallone, the Italian actor.

Three notable French actors, Daniel Gélin, Jean Marais and Frank Villard have been in Rome to join Aldo Fabrizi and Eduardo Cianelli in *The House of Silence*, a Franco-Italian picture directed by G. W. Pabst. Gérard Philipe is rumoured to have signed to play La Fayette in a large-scale Korda production before starting *Thyl Uylenspiegel* in Belgium for his own company. After that he goes to Mexico to play in a film for Bunuel. More curious undertakings are *Un Don de Ciel*, Georges Lacombe's follow-up to his *Roberto*, with the musical wonder boy Robert Benzi conducting "Gotterdämmerung" and reforming his alcoholic father (Jean Marais); and the ambitious, expensive *Le Chemin de Damas*, with its reconstruction of ancient Jerusalem in the Joinville studios. Max Glass, writer, co-producer and director, formerly history professor at Vienna



Two new films with ballets. Above: Ellen Rasch in the "Meeting with a Stranger" ballet from the Swedish "Firebird." More details this page.

University, is retracing the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and his subsequent fate as St. Paul. Michel Simon plays Caiphas, Claude Laydu is St. Stephen, and a little-known actor, Jean-Marc Tennberg, is cast for the leading part. Glass objects to jocular references in the press to the French de Mille: "My picture does not aim at morbid sensation or cheap spectacle for the masses. It is concerned with spiritual conflict and human tragedy."

### Swedish Firebird

PETER CRAIG RAYMOND writes: Lorens Marmstedt, producer of the three-language *Singoalla*, has tucked a second and probably rarer bird in his belt—a film around the Fokine-Stravinsky *Firebird*. This two-hour film includes three ballet sequences; the Russo-Swedish ballerina, Ellen Rasch, who at one time worked with Antony Tudor, dances throughout, with the Royal Stockholm Opera Ballet, and Tito Gobbi (arias from the usual Mozart and Rossini) is backed by the same theatre's chorus. A romantic plot is built round the ballets rather in the manner of *The Red Shoes*.

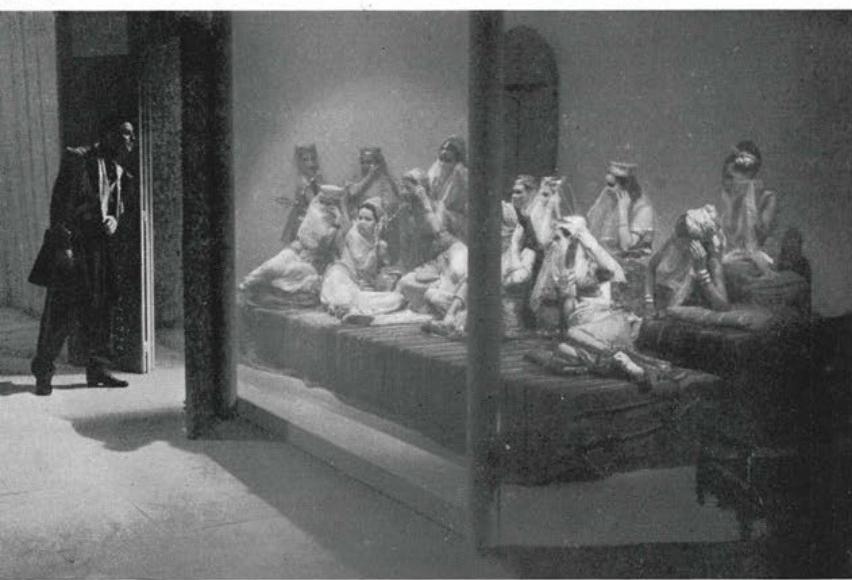
A young Swedish director, Hasse Ekman, is in charge, and the film has been photographed in the Belgian process, Gevacolor. (Christian-Jaque used this for his *Barbe-Bleue*). This new process is now in use by many European film producing countries, and certainly a major attraction is that Gevacolor is run through an ordinary black and white camera and developed and printed in any black and white laboratory. Whether the results are as good as they are economical remains to be seen.

The cameraman, Goran Strindberg, grandson of the dramatist, has photographed Sweden's first colour film. His work on *Miss Julie* has, of course, been highly praised. Marmstedt engaged him after his recovery from an illness that forced him out of Sjöberg's production in Israel of Lagerkvist's novel, *Barabbas*.

The two ballets besides *Firebird* are *Meeting with a Stranger*, based on French chansons, and a *grand pas de deux* in classical style. The film will be shown in England later this year.

### U.S. Censorship

The decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *The Miracle* may have important results for American film censorship. Rossellini's film was refused a licence by the New York State Board of Regents nearly two years ago, being attacked as sacrilegious, and the State Appeal Court upheld this decision. The distributor, Joseph Burstyn, took the case to the Supreme Court, who have now reversed the verdict, on the grounds that "sacrilege", in a case of this sort, cannot be defined. More far-reaching is the Court's reversal of its own ruling in 1915, that film exhibition was "a business pure and simple" and "not to be regarded as part of the press of this country or as organs of public opinion." The new court opinion, delivered by Justice Clark, states that "it cannot be doubted that motion pictures are a significant medium for the communication



Gérard Philipe as the hero of René Clair's "Belles de Nuit," who enjoys a series of imaginary nocturnal encounters with lovely ladies.



*Moira Shearer, as a ballerina, and Agnes Moorehead, in the second episode of "Story of Three Loves," directed by Vincente Minnelli. Other players include James Mason, Kirk Douglas, Leslie Caron, Farley Granger.*

*of ideas . . . We conclude that expression by means of motion pictures is included within the free speech and free press guarantee of the First and Fourteenth Amendments.*" The Court ruling, however, also stated that state censorship can be sustained in "exceptional cases" (mentioning obscenity and incitement to breach of the peace), and, as the *Motion Picture Herald* comments, "*a number of further test cases would have to be taken to court in an effort to elicit from the Supreme Court a more precise definition of the extent to which censorship can be applied by states and communities.*"

The Court has also reversed the conviction of the Texas exhibitor who was sentenced for showing the film *Pinky* in defiance of a local censorship board's ruling. Another controversial film, *La Ronde*, has recently been refused a licence in New York; the state Appeal Court upheld the ban by a three to two decision, but the dissenting opinion of Judge Foster, who said "*Either motion pictures may be censored or they cannot be. I can see no practical middle ground*" is regarded as a sign of the changing times. If the distributor of *La Ronde* appeals to the Supreme Court, this would provide another test case which might further clarify the position.

#### A Likely Uylenspiegel

FRANCIS BOLEN writes: Charles de Coster's "legend" of Thyl Uylenspiegel, written 85 years ago, has long attracted film-makers. In 1949, at the Knokke Film Festival, Henri Storck roused the interest of Vittorio de Sica and Gérard Philipe in such a project. Later, a German producer also considered a version. Then Gérard Philipe formed his own production company, with capital from his earnings as an actor, and visited the Uylenspiegel country with a scriptwriter, René Wheeler.

It should be remembered, incidentally, that the Germans claim the original Eulenspiegel, who was born at Kneitlingen, in Brunswick, and died, after many adventures, of the plague in 1350. From Germany the legend moved into Flanders and France. Charles de Coster did not invent Uylenspiegel; he based his story on existing material and on anecdotes current in Belgium since the 18th century. His great virtue is to have elevated a happy adventurer to a national hero fighting with as much courage as cunning against foreign tyranny (Philip II and the Duke of Alba) and religious persecution (the Inquisition).

When Gérard Philipe declares today that he sees in Thyl the symbol of the proletarian struggling for liberty, he scarcely deviates from the great Belgian writer's conception. One hopes that the director (not yet decided) and the scriptwriter, René Wheeler, will be equal to the picaresque vitality of the original.

Shooting is expected to start next spring. Exteriors will be filmed in the north of France, in Belgium and Holland. Part of the finance is coming from Belgium, and there is also talk of a subsidy from the Ministry of Public Education and Fine Arts, who

may also advise on local colour. The actual colour will be provided by Gevacolor.

#### The Un-American Tragedy

A letter from the Hollywood branch of the American Federation of Labor Film Council to the House Un-American Activities Committee asks for a ban on the importation and distribution of films made abroad by people "holding membership in or loyalty to the Communist party." The Council has also approached United Artists, who have a contract to distribute the film, not to release *Encounter*, recently made in Italy with Paul Muni. It names four people associated with this production as Communists or suspected Communists—producers John Weber and Bernard Vorhaus, director Joseph Losey, writer Ben Barzman. The film is mentioned in the Council's letter to the Un-American Activities Committee, who are urged "to take immediate steps to see to it that this picture is not shown in an American theatre."

Various persons, the letter continues, "who can no longer find employment in the motion picture industry in Hollywood" have gone to work in Europe and Mexico. If the Council's plea to ban showings in America of the films they have since made fails, it is stated, "fellow unionists in the projection rooms of American theatres" will be called upon to refuse to operate.

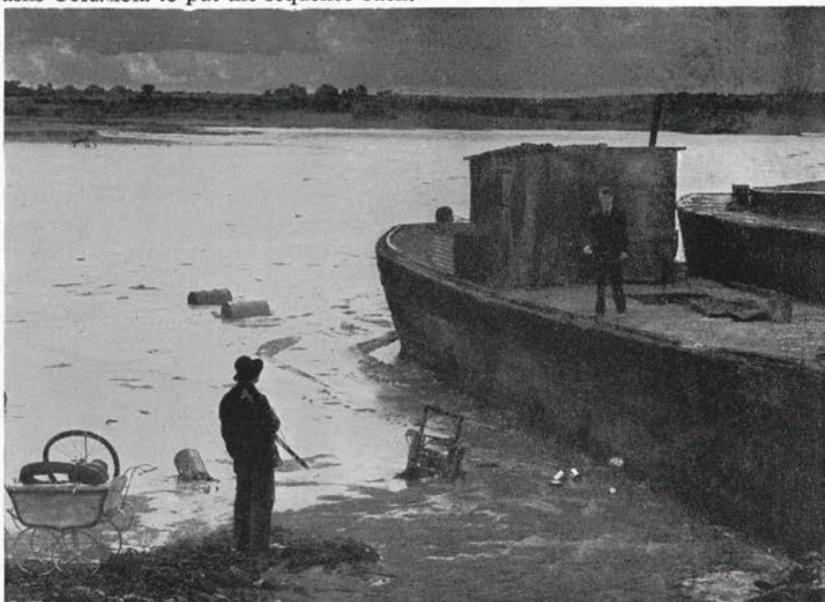
The case rests for the moment. Meanwhile, a Hollywood Committee for Senator McCarthy, pledged to support the re-election of a senator "courageous and willing enough to fight for our American way of life," has been set up under the chairmanship of an 80-year-old actor-writer, Rupert Hughes, with Ward Bond, John Wayne and writer Morrie Ryskind as vice-chairmen. Members so far recruited include Louis B. Mayer, Cecil B. de Mille, Leo McCarey, Harold Lloyd, Adolphe Menjou, George Murphy, Pat O'Brien, Dennis Morgan, Dick Powell and Ray Milland.

#### Short Ends

*The Sniper*, Edward Dmytryk's film for Stanley Kramer, was erroneously reported in the last issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND* to have been banned in this country. Columbia have now released the picture with an "X" certificate and a few censorship cuts.

*Carrie*, William Wyler's version of the Dreiser novel, was cut by about 10 minutes during its first London run. Paramount removed, presumably to reduce length and gloom, the flophouse sequences, and generally released this barbarously shortened version.

*Le Plaisir*, Max Ophuls' film of three Maupassant stories, was shown at Edinburgh with the second brothel sequence of *La Maison Tellier* cut out. It is presumably to be offered to London with this misleading vacuum. A front-office hunch on the part of the distributors, Columbia, was that the British censor would be more lenient to a film with one brothel sequence than with two. The British censor's open-mindedness is well known, and we hope he asks Columbia to put the sequence back.



*"The Long Memory," Robert Hamer's new melodrama with a Thames-side setting. John Mills, on barge, and Michael Martin-Harvey on shore.*



U.P.A.'s "Rooty Toot Toot," a version of "Frankie and Johnnie".

### The Festivals

#### EDINBURGH

Any general comment on this year's festival can only be a postscript to the previous one, for "documentary" as such continued to give the impression of being fatally stereotyped, and the interesting things came under the broader headings of "realist" and "experimental." There is indirect consolation in the claim that documentary influence has been successfully extended into other genres, and this was made notably with reference to the feature that opened the festival, *The Brave Don't Cry*. Yet even although the majority of critics (including Edgar Anstey elsewhere in this issue) have given high praise to this sober and conscientiously sustained work, its imaginative qualities seem to me to have been over-rated; and I am not sure it has not absorbed some of the weaknesses as well as the virtues of documentary, especially in its one-dimensional approach to character.

The documentary problem has been widely discussed, not least in the pages of SIGHT AND SOUND; the loss of social impetus, the lack of untrammelled sponsorship, have been generally agreed on, but there has been less emphasis on something that is surely more vital than either—personal talent, personal imagination. Without this, we are reduced to such intensely boring experiences as *Edinburgh, Housewife's Relief, Small Town Editor, Australia's Greatest River . . .* But there is no end to that list, and from country after country they come; the straightforward, efficient instructional film with no further pretensions, is infinitely better.

It is interesting, too, that just as the nadir of documentary is this dead, impersonal quality, so the nadir of "experiment," especially

in America, seems to be abstraction. In a programme of experimental films, mainly abstracts—of which only one, *Abstract in Concrete* by John Arvono, a study of neonlight reflections and patterns on a Broadway night, had any quality—the Scots film about Edinburgh children's traditional songs, *The Singing Street*, stood out at once for its direct response to human material. It could, admittedly, have been better; it lacks shape, it is very amateurishly photographed, but it has a genuine poetic centre. The Oxford University Film Society's ballet experiment, *Between Two Worlds*, which followed, returned us to a dead world. It shows technical accomplishment rare in a non-professional film, but it is conceived in a *passé* decorative style in which all the emphasis is on trick settings, camera and colour effects. Ballet, after all, has a primary element, which is people dancing; here, what little choreography—and dramatic point—exist, are submerged in superimposed decor and other remote, mechanical devices. The total result is bilious and synthetic.

By far the best abstract of the Festival was Norman McLaren's *A Phantasy*, which had by contrast a classical purity and simplicity. Its invention is prolific, but on a small and disciplined scale; the impact is comparable to a piece of chamber music. As in *Neighbours*, a little morality of savage humour, in which for the first time McLaren uses natural images, one responds to a complete, a wholehearted personal style. The feeling of concoction, which so many films conveyed at Edinburgh, is absent. The same is true of Sucksdorff's *Indian Village*, a descriptive poem in his best lyrical style; of *Cité du Midi* (by Jacques Baratier, who made the amusing *Désordre*), a charming impression of circus acrobats training and exercising, watched by Michel Simon, himself once a circus performer; and of the three U.P.A. cartoons, notably *Rooty Toot Toot*, a delicious new version of the ballad "Frankie and Johnnie."

The features shown ranged from the primitive to the highly sophisticated. The Philippine *Genghis Khan* made an impression similar to *Aan* in its naive dependence on Hollywood traditions, but it had also an original and unique bloodthirstiness. Its frequent battle scenes are put together with a ferocious but not unimpressive crudity. Max Ophuls' virtuoso *Le Plaisir* will be fully reviewed in SIGHT AND SOUND when it comes to London later this year; two of its three Maupassant stories, *Le Masque*, and *Le Modèle*, with Daniel Gélin and Simone Simon, are most interestingly done. René Clément's remarkable *Jeux Interdits*, coming to London at the end of this year, is also held over for review. It was a pity that the Italians decided to substitute Lattuada's *Il Cappotto*, a solidly executed but rather laborious version of Gogol's story, for de Sica's *Umberto D*. The other film of note, *Death of a Salesman*, has already been seen in London.

Other activities during the festival included the British Film Institute's summer school, organised in collaboration with the Scottish Film Council; over 80 students attended the course, one week in Glasgow, and one (the first of the festival) in Edinburgh. The lecturers at Edinburgh were Max Ophuls, John Grierson, Dilys Powell, Compton Mackenzie and Duncan Macrae. As planned last year, there was also a discussion on the relationship between documentary film-makers and their sponsors—from government and industry—to which many people notable in this field contributed. Comment will have to be delayed until our next issue.

GAVIN LAMBERT.

#### VENICE

To a newcomer to the occasion, a continental film festival seems agreeably to unite the divided worlds of the cinema: art and trade, serious criticism and the most expertly staged commercial display. If the latter element appeared slightly to predominate at Venice, and if the awards had in a few cases an air of diplomatic compromise, it was because the films, in the absence of the originally hoped for *Limelight* and *The Golden Coach*—whose coach, however, made frequent appearances outside the cinema—too seldom deserved the occasion. Whether the world's industries can really support two annual festivals such as Cannes and Venice is, of course, a perennial question; what one missed at Venice, for all its attractions, was the excitement of discovery.

René Clément's *Jeux Interdits* (also seen in Edinburgh and soon to open in London) was, however, an honourable prize-winner. This study of two children who play their forbidden games with the trappings of death impresses at a first viewing by its mixture of tenderness and brutality, by the severe economy of narrative style. Apart from a slight touch of the studio in the handling of the farm



An encounter with death: Brigitte Fossey, Georges Poujouly, in Clément's "Jeux Interdits".

interiors, the film makes no compromise with the box-office and in Paris was apparently a commercial disaster; an award which will bring it further to public notice is especially welcome.

If Clement surprises by a sympathy and delicacy of touch which his previous work had scarcely suggested, Rossellini continues to disappoint and perplex. *Europa 51* is the story of a rich man's wife who, after the death of her son as the indirect result of a suicide attempt, comes under the influence of a Communist journalist and decides to devote herself to the poor. Her experiences lead her, by a remarkably round-about route, to a lunatic asylum, another snakepit; this, Rossellini appears to be saying, is the fate the genuinely good must expect in the modern world. The theme, the search for an individual salvation, is certainly ambitious enough, but the treatment is lamentably muddled: a facile traffic with undeveloped political and social ideas, a poorly constructed story, an atmosphere of pretentious confusion. Although Ingrid Bergman brings to the part a good deal more conviction than it deserves, the film can only mark a further stage in the decline of Rossellini's inflated reputation.

Another major work, Clair's *Les Belles-de-Nuit*, was taken out of the competition and so ineligible for a prize, though Clair himself received a personal tribute. The story of a young composer (Gérard Philipe) who in his dreams pursues beauty, in the form of Gina Lollobrigida, Martine Carole and Magali Vendeil, through the ages, the fantasy, though unevenly sustained, has delightful moments, such as the use of sound effects in the early scenes, or a chase by jeep from the stone age to the present day, and characteristic flashes of elegance and gaiety.

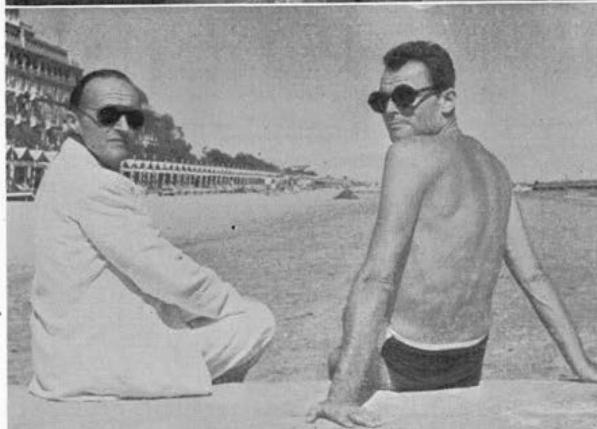
Ford's magnificent *The Quiet Man*, enthusiastically received, was awarded prizes by the international Catholic organisation and by the Italian critics, and shared international prizes with *Europa 51* and the Japanese *O-Haru*, a film reported to be over-long but of considerable power and interest. The American entry also included *Death of a Salesman*, shown without subtitles and none too well liked, though the acting prize went to Fredric March, *Ivanhoe* (in spite of its position as a British quota film) and *The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima*, in which three disagreeably cute teenagers are informed by a vision (in Portugal, in 1917) that there will be trouble from Russia. The first example of the new colour process, Warnercolor, here vulgarly used, the film has the cheapness and incongruity common to Hollywood's ventures into this field. Also shown, *hors concours*, was the Clarence Green-Russell Rouse film without dialogue, *The Thief*. A chase story about a scientist traitor, the film uses effective location work to support a worth trying but unsatisfactory stunt: one becomes too conscious of the mechanics involved, and Ray Milland glumly looks as though he were longing to open his mouth. The American entry of seven films won the prize for the best national selection, a tribute to the weight of numbers.

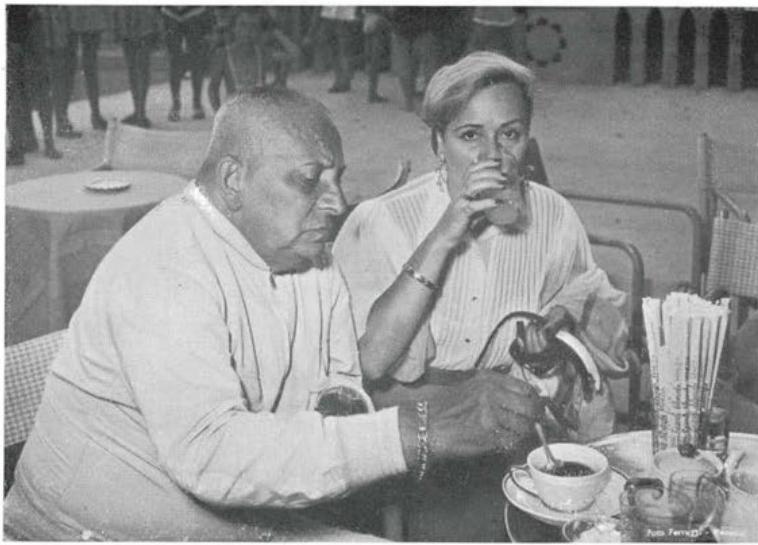
Britain, represented by *The Importance of Being Earnest* (prize for decor), *Mandy* (special prize for treatment of its subject) and *The Brave Don't Cry*, won respectable if modest honours. The French also gained a special prize with *La Bergère et le Ramoneur*, a Grimault cartoon of considerable elegance and wit. The Prévert script introduces a blind street musician and philosopher, a character of whom, in his various manifestations, one has tired, and some of the fantasy falls a little flat, but there is much to enjoy. The film will be seen here with the voices of Peter Ustinov, Claire Bloom and Denholm Elliott replacing those of Brasseur, Anouk and Reggiani. Given a premiere at Venice, though not a festival entry, was Yves Allegret's *La Jeune Fille*, a story of ill-fated love strangely set in Dublin during the 'twenties. A cold, depressing and remote stylistic exercise, the film takes on a certain quality from Danièle Delorme's remarkable and touching performance.

The Italians themselves, apart from *Europa 51*, had only minor works to show. Blasetti's *Altri Tempi*, which I missed, was received with no great enthusiasm; Germi's *Il Brigante di Tacca del Lupo*, a bandits-and-soldiers story, is meticulously composed but surprisingly without excitement; and *Il Sciocco Bianco*, the first film from the screenwriter Federico Fellini, mildly entertains with its story of a girl who deserts her husband during their honeymoon to visit her favourite film star.

Among the inevitable crop of curiosities were some disagreeable exercises in violence from South America, the Spanish *Los Ojos dejan Huellas* (with the Italians Elena Varzi and Raf Vallone in the leading parts), a carbon copy Hollywood thriller which has been paid the dubious tribute of American purchase for a remake, and the preposterous *Monsoon*, based on Anouilh's *Romeo et Juliette*, set in India and remarkable for a childish love-hate story and for dialogue suggesting an unkind parody of the Anouilh mannerisms.

People at Venice, photographed by Robert Hawkins. Top to bottom, Danièle Delorme, star of "La Jeune Folle"; René Clément (centre) with the child player, Brigitte Fossey, of his "Jeux Interdits," Madame Fossey, and Jean Aurenche, the script-writer; René Clair and André Cayatte; left, Joan Fontaine and Claudette Colbert; right, Luchino Visconti, with Italian actress Rina Morelli.





Venice Festival: Eric von Stroheim and his wife, Denise Vernac, on the Lido.

More specialised manifestations of the Festival this year, for which I unfortunately arrived too late, were a retrospective review of the early Italian cinema, and some showings of experimental films. The prize winner of the documentary and scientific festival, Emmer's *Leonardo da Vinci*, in Gevacolor, makes a fascinating and ably presented tribute.—PENELOPE HOUSTON.

### Berlin and Locarno

FRANCIS KOVAL writes: A rather regrettable tendency has increased, within the last few years, to regard Film Festivals as a kind of Olympic Games, and consequently to focus attention on "winners" and "recordbreakers," at the expense of some noteworthy achievements overlooked by juries, of new promise, and of personalities (like the late Robert Flaherty's presence at Cannes in 1949) who can give a routine event the imprint of real distinction.

The International Film Producers Federation has further strengthened this trend by ruling last year that only the Cannes and Venice Festivals may award prizes—as if this were a vital privilege. Consequently public and trade are inclined to consider Berlin and Locarno—and even Edinburgh—as "substandard" Festivals. They may lack the slickness and glamour of the Mediterranean holiday resorts, but their artistic and commercial importance should not, all the same, be underestimated.

As far as Berlin is concerned, the idea of its *Film-Festspiele* is so deeply rooted in the unique and abnormal political situation that its significance may almost be equated with that of the "Airlift." Berliners are restricted in their enjoyment of what is grandiloquently called "Western culture," represented in the cinema by a flood of Hollywood product and a mere trickle of English, French and Italian pictures, all of them dubbed (many crudely at that). In the town's Russian sector, films from western Europe are banned altogether. So, in keeping with the custom adopted by most West Berlin cinemas, people from the Eastern sector were admitted to the Festival shows at considerably reduced prices.

In this sense the Berlin Festival has become a true public's festival underlined by the public's vote for their favourite films. The vote, it need hardly be said, differs from the verdict of critics, and never more so than in the case of the Swedish *She Danced Only One Summer*, voted top of the public's "first ten." This picture has become famous, or notorious, for its nude love scene; though it can also claim pleasant photography and good acting, it is in no way outstanding.

One could equally reproach Berliners for omitting *The River* and *Rashomon* from their honours list, and perhaps also Henri Decoin's *La Vérité sur Bébé Donge*, a penetrating if rather longwinded study of frustrated love, with Danielle Darrieux and Jean Gabin. On the other hand, *Miracolo a Milano*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Well*, and an agreeable light comedy with Arletty and Francois Perier, *L'Amour, Madame*, were popular favourites that would no doubt have been acknowledged also by a jury. It was interesting, too, to watch Berliners appreciating Jeanson's lightning speed, satirical dialogue in *Fanfan la Tulipe* (placed second on the list) and enjoying

the mockery of militarism. Lattuada's Gogol adaptation, *Il Cappotto*, and *Cry, the Beloved Country*, both ignored at Cannes, were third and fourth on the Berliners' list.

The new Italian pictures did not altogether live up to expectations. Emmer's *Ragazze di Piazza di Spagna* has the same qualities and faults of his two earlier films, and Visconti's impatiently awaited *Bellissima*, in spite of some interesting technique and Anna Magnani's performance, was very uneven. As for *Sensualità*, the touchy and rather sophisticated Berlin public (very different from the rest of Germany), dismissed its melodramatic exaggerations with repeated outbursts of laughter. All the same, its unknown director Clemente Fracassi might be given another chance, for, between all the crudities and obvious inexperience, there are signs of talent in some descriptive passages. The film's new high-powered star, Eleonora Drago-Rossi, is clearly set, by the way, for a busy future.

Among the personalities present—Françoise Rosay, Michel Simon, René Clement, R. A. Stemmle, Arletty, Gino Cervi, William Holden, Jean Kent—undoubtedly the Berlin-born Billy Wilder, with his ready wit and charm, raised the temperature of the *Festspiele* by a few degrees. He might have done so even more effectively if he had not been hampered by a swarm of self-important "executives."

Now, this is Locarno's great advantage. Its July festival, following closely on Berlin, has always been agreeably informal. Interesting and always accessible visitors included Eric Pommer, and the director of his new production, Rudolf Jugert (*Nachts auf den Strassen*, slick, capable, but not inspired), Jacques Becker and his scriptwriter Annette Wadement, Claude Dauphin and Anne Vernon, and an Italian contingent including de Santis, Zampa, Amedeo Nazzari, Carla del Poggio, and Giovanni Guareschi, author of "The Little World of Don Camillo," Duvivier's film of which received its Swiss première.

Guarasci, who startled everybody by looking exactly like Don Camillo's opponent, Peppone, in the film, expressed satisfaction with it and its success, even though he considered many of its anti-communist accents had been suppressed. The Locarno festival is not competitive, but every year the international film journalists present their own awards for the most "human," the most "artistic" and the most "optimistic" picture. *Don Camillo* easily won for the last category, though *The Card* was also favoured. Becker's *Casque d'Or* was considered the most "artistic," and the choice of *Hunted* as the most "human" was an unexpected British triumph, for Charles Crichton's picture had been reviewed in London with a rather cool benevolence.

John Huston's *The African Queen* aroused much protest from the German journalists. They objected to the "pronounced anti-German tendency" of the film, and its presentation of the World War I German soldier as "executioner and incendiary." German trade organisations have now banned its distribution in Germany.

As usual in Locarno, the Italians strove for the greatest impact, but this time they somehow failed, partly through lack of subtitles in most of their films, which aroused as many protests as their mismanaged hospitality arrangements. Zampa's *Processo all' Città* had its world première unsubtitled, but even so proved to be the most powerful of the Italian selection. The skilfully constructed story, based on a famous criminal case, has an excellent 1900's atmosphere, and perceptively analyses the conflicting psychological approaches of police chief and investigating judge, played remarkably well by Paolo Stoppa and Amedeo Nazzari.

De Santis' *Roma, Ore II* proved a sad object lesson in how to destroy, through over-emphasis, a good subject with a star-studded cast. The starting-point is the real life disaster in which a staircase in Rome collapsed under the weight of 200 girl typists; de Santis overstates the (slightly faked) horror and the tragedy's social implications. More seriously, these implications are stated in interminable dialogue, which finally deadens the spectator's response. Some sequences, and most of the acting, though make an impression. The veteran director Augusto Genina uses the same incident for his *Tre Storie Proibite* (also shown in Berlin). Three stories culminating in the staircase collapse are treated with craftsmanship and superficial gloss; the sharply humorous central episode is also original, and in the hands of, say, Preston Sturges, might have been brilliant.

Lattuada's *Anna* (soon to be seen, dubbed, in London) is a routine box-office picture, which this director was obliged to shoot in order to achieve his ambition of making *Il Cappotto*. Franciolini's *Buon Giorno, Elefante* had much charm, and was obviously imbued with the spirit of its leading actor, Vittorio de Sica. These variable Italian offerings produced some unjustifiable journalistic pronouncements that "neo-realism" had come to a dead end.

## THE GOLDEN COACH



Magnani and Renoir

*The Golden Coach (La Carrozza d'Oro)* is the latest film by Jean Renoir. Made in Italy, in English and Italian versions, it is adapted from a story by Merimée; Camilla (Anna Magnani) is the leading actress of a travelling company in Spanish America during the last century. Three men fall in love with her—Felipe, a fellow actor, Ramon, a famous bullfighter, and the viceroy of the Spanish colony. The viceroy gives her the "Golden Coach," which symbolises glory and power. A scandal follows, the viceroy's position is threatened, but Camilla tactfully donates the Coach to the local bishop, who uses it for the transport of Holy Sacrament.

Filmed in Technicolor by Claude Renoir (cameraman of *The River*), this dramatic comedy promises to be one of the most outstanding of new films. It will be shown in Europe at the end of this year. Renoir himself intends to make another film in Europe during 1953; the subject is reported to be a short story by Tchekhov.



# AS THE CRITICS LIKE IT

As a sequel to the Brussels Referendum (featured in the previous issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND*), in which about 100 film directors were asked to vote for what they considered the Ten Best Films of all time, we decided to ask critics the same question. 85 critics, from Britain, France, the United States, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, were asked, and 63 responded; the co-operation is much appreciated.

Most critics were unanimous in finding the question unfair. "What an awful idea," "What a thing to ask," "I feel simply broken," "disturbing," "impossible," "barbarous," "silly" and "lousy" were among the comments passed. One pointed out that he had seen about 3,200 films, another that he had seen exactly 5,777. As with the Brussels Referendum letter, our request was for personal references—"the films that have impressed you most personally"—and many critics were quick and right to answer that the films one thought best (in the history of the cinema, etc.), were not necessarily the films one liked best. Other reservations were that memory plays tricks, and that 10 was an unreasonable and arbitrary number. Why not 50? asked one contributor (sounding in 15 choices). Why not 2½? suggested another.

Space, unfortunately, does not permit us to include all these interesting, apt and sometimes desperate reservations, nor to publish every individual list. In the space available we have tried to print as representative a selection as possible, bearing in mind nationality, types of critic (daily paper, weekly, magazine, occasional, writer of books, etc.), and the interest of listing as many different films as possible. We apologise for the omissions.

As can be seen, the top four choices of the critics agree with those of the directors, though in a different order. *Bicycle Thieves* won easily with 25 out of a possible 63 votes, the two Chaplin films tied with 19 each, and *Potemkin* followed with 16. After that the number dropped to 12, and the films followed each other very closely, four tying for the last place.

Films in the critics' and not the directors' best ten are *Louisiana Story*, *Le Jour se Lève*, *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, *Intolerance* and *La Règle du Jeu*. Apart from these, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki*, *Earth*, *Citizen Kane*, *Monsieur Verdoux*, *Que Viva Mexico*, *Zéro de Conduite* and *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* are placed high in the runners-up by critics, and not by directors. Some of the directors' strongest personal choices, by contrast—*Hallelujah!*, *Foolish Wives*, *Storm over Asia*, *Le Diable au Corps*, *Dreigroschenoper*—receive considerably fewer votes in this referendum.

Most appropriate last word, perhaps, from a distracted critic: "Goodness, how hard it was to whittle down!"

## THE TEN BEST FILMS

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. <i>Bicycle Thieves</i> (de Sica, 1949): 25 |       |
| 2. <i>City Lights</i> (Chaplin, 1930)         | }: 19 |
| <i>The Gold Rush</i> (Chaplin, 1925)          |       |
| 4. <i>Potemkin</i> (Eisenstein, 1925): 16     |       |
| 5. <i>Louisiana Story</i> (Flaherty, 1947)    | }: 12 |
| <i>Intolerance</i> (Griffith, 1916)           |       |
| 7. <i>Greed</i> (von Stroheim, 1924)          |       |
| <i>Le Jour se Lève</i> (Carne, 1939)          | }: 11 |
| <i>Passion de Jeanne d'Arc</i> (Dreyer, 1928) |       |
| 10. <i>Brief Encounter</i> (Lean, 1945)       |       |
| <i>Le Million</i> (Clair, 1930)               | }: 10 |
| <i>La Règle du Jeu</i> (Renoir, 1939)         |       |

## MAIN RUNNERS-UP

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 1. <i>Citizen Kane</i> (Welles, 1941)              | }: 9 |
| <i>La Grande Illusion</i> (Renoir, 1932)           |      |
| <i>Grapes of Wrath</i> (Ford, 1940)                |      |
| 2. <i>Childhood of Maxim Gorki</i> (Donskoi, 1938) | }: 8 |
| <i>Monsieur Verdoux</i> (Chaplin, 1947)            |      |
| <i>Que Viva Mexico</i> (Eisenstein, 1931)          |      |
| 3. <i>Earth</i> (Dovzhenko, 1929)                  | }: 7 |
| <i>Zero de Conduite</i> (Vigo, 1932)               |      |
| <i>Broken Blossoms</i> (Griffith, 1919)            |      |
| <i>Dames du Bois de Boulogne</i> (Bresson, 1945)   | }: 6 |
| <i>Hallelujah!</i> (Vidor, 1929)                   |      |

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 5. <i>L'Age d'Or</i> (Bunuel, 1930)       | }: 5 |
| <i>A Nous la Liberté</i> (Clair 1931)     |      |
| <i>Birth of a Nation</i> (Griffith, 1914) |      |
| <i>Dreigroschenoper</i> (Pabst, 1931)     |      |
| <i>Enfants du Paradis</i> (Carne, 1945)   |      |
| <i>Henry V</i> (Olivier, 1944)            |      |
| <i>Man of Aran</i> (Flaherty, 1934)       |      |
| <i>Miracolo a Milano</i> (de Sica, 1951)  |      |
| <i>Los Olvidados</i> (Bunuel, 1950)       |      |
| <i>Stagecoach</i> (Ford, 1939)            |      |

## SOME PERSONAL CHOICES

### LINDSAY ANDERSON (Britain)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Earth</i>                              | 2. <i>They Were Expendable</i> (Ford)                       |
| 3. <i>Zero de Conduite</i> , <i>Atalante</i> | 4. <i>Childhood of Maxim Gorki</i> (Vigo)                   |
| 6. <i>Louisiana Story</i> , <i>The River</i> | 5. <i>Grapes of Wrath</i> , <i>Bicycle Thieves</i> (Renoir) |
| 9. <i>Douce</i> (Autant-Lara)                | 7. <i>Fires Were Started</i> (Jennings)                     |
| <i>Antoine et Antoinette</i> (Becker)        | 8. <i>La Règle du Jeu</i> , <i>Le Jour se Lève</i>          |
| <i>Force of Evil</i> (Polonsky)              | 10. <i>Meet Me in St. Louis</i> (Minnelli)                  |

"... A selection of Desert Island films, with no pretence at completeness.... I have also cheated outrageously: but then isn't the question itself a bit of a cheat?"

### GUIDO ARISTARCO (Italy)

- |                                    |                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Chapaev</i> (Vassiliev)      | 2. <i>Enfants du Paradis</i>         |
| 3. <i>Grande Illusion</i>          | 4. <i>Monsieur Verdoux</i>           |
| 5. <i>Jeanne d'Arc</i>             | 6. <i>Potemkin</i>                   |
| 7. <i>Quatorze Juillet</i> (Clair) | 8. <i>Stagecoach</i>                 |
| 9. <i>Tabu</i> (Flaherty-Murnau)   | 10. <i>La Terra Trema</i> (Visconti) |
- (Alphabetical order)

### RUDOLF ARNHEIM (U.S.A.)

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>The Wedding March</i> (Stoheim)     | 2. <i>City Lights</i>             |
| 3. <i>The General</i> (Keaton)            | 4. <i>Potemkin</i>                |
| 5. <i>Road to Life</i> (Ekk)              | 6. <i>Our Daily Bread</i> (Vidor) |
| 7. <i>Sous les Toits de Paris</i> (Clair) | 8. <i>Man of Aran</i> (Flaherty)  |
| 9. <i>Bicycle Thieves</i>                 | 10. <i>Rashomon</i> (Kurosawa)    |

### ALEXANDRE ASTRUC (France)

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Sunrise</i> (Murnau)         | 2. <i>October</i> (Eisenstein)            |
| 3. <i>Foolish Wives</i> (Stroheim) | 4. <i>Nosferatu</i> (Murnau)              |
| 5. <i>L'Age d'Or</i>               | 6. <i>Vampyr</i> (Dreyer)                 |
| 7. <i>Que Viva Mexico</i>          | 8. <i>You Only Live Once</i> (Lang)       |
| 9. <i>La Règle du Jeu</i>          | 10. <i>Magnificent Ambersons</i> (Welles) |

### IRIS BARRY (U.S.A.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Intolerance</i>                    | 2. <i>Monsieur Verdoux</i>                  |
| 3. <i>Fragment of an Empire</i> (Ermler) | 4. <i>A Nous la Liberté!</i> (Clair)        |
| 5. <i>Dreigroschenoper</i>               | 6. <i>Triumph of the Will</i> (Riefenstahl) |
| 7. <i>Public Enemy</i> (Wellman)         | 8. <i>Tawny Pipit</i> (Miles)               |
| 9. <i>King Kong</i> (Schoedsack)         | 10. <i>Louisiana Story</i>                  |

"... A hotchpotch of personal bias... out of confusion and the experience of a lifetime"

### ANDRÉ BAZIN (France)

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Les Vampires</i> (Feuillade)      | 2. <i>The Pilgrim</i> (Chaplin)    |
| 3. <i>Broken Blossoms</i>               | 4. <i>Sunrise</i>                  |
| 5. <i>Greed</i>                         | 6. <i>La Règle du Jeu</i>          |
| 7. <i>Le Jour se Lève</i>               | 8. <i>The Little Foxes</i> (Wyler) |
| 9. <i>Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne</i> | 10. <i>Bicycle Thieves</i>         |

"A series of personal awards, on critical reflection, rather than of original memories and impacts..."

### JOSH BILLINGS (Britain)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i>  | 2. <i>Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse</i> (Ingram) |
| 3. <i>In Which we Serve</i> (Coward)      | 4. <i>Mutiny on the Bounty</i> (Lloyd)             |
| 6. <i>One Way Passage</i> (Garnett)       | 5. <i>Ninotchka</i> (Lubitsch)                     |
| 8. <i>Best Years of our Lives</i> (Wyler) | 7. <i>Pygmalion</i> (Asquith)                      |
| 10. <i>Way Down East</i> (Griffith)       | 9. <i>Snow White</i> (Disney)                      |
- (Alphabetical order)

**FRANCIS BOLEN (Belgium)**

1. Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Wiene)
2. The Phantom Carriage (Seastrom)
3. Gold Rush.
4. Nanook of the North (Flaherty)
5. Napoleon (Gance)
6. Erotikon (Machaty)
7. L'Hippocampe (Painlevé)
8. Potemkin
9. Citizen Kane
10. Le Diable au Corps (Autant-Lara)

**FREDA BRUCE-LOCKHART (Britain)**

1. Jeanne d'Arc
2. Birth of a Nation
3. Le Million
4. Louisiana Story
5. Stagecoach
6. Ninotchka
7. Top Hat (Astaire-Rogers)
8. The Third Man (Reed)
9. Farrebique (Rouquier)
10. La Règle du Jeu

**OVE BRUSENDORFF (Denmark)**

1. Tol'able David (King)
2. Broken Blossoms
3. Gold Rush
4. Berkeley Square (Lloyd)
5. Mother (Pudovkin)
6. Gosta Berling (Stiller)
7. Mutter Krausen's Fährt ins Glück (Jutzi)
8. Queen Christina (Mamoulian)
9. Dreigroschenoper
10. Stagecoach.

**CONNERY CHAPPELL (Britain)**

1. New Year's Eve (Lupu Pick)
2. Italian Straw Hat (Clair)
3. Joyless Street (Pabst)
4. The General Line (Eisenstein)
5. Berlin (Ruttmann)
6. City Lights
7. Finis Terrae (Epstein)
8. Variety (Dupont)
9. Bicycle Thieves
10. Kind Hearts and Coronets (Hamer)

"I have no talent for reconciling opposites, and no ability to differentiate between chalk and cheese.... However, I will very happily give you this list of films which made a very strong impression on me when I saw them, and which I remember with pleasure . . ."

**GEORGES CHARENTE (France)**

1. Gold Rush
2. Louisiana Story
3. Jeanne d'Arc
4. Le Million
5. Bicycle Thieves
6. Brief Encounter
7. Thy Soul shall Bear Witness (Seastrom)
8. Broken Blossoms
9. Mother
10. Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne

**LOUIS CHAUDET (France)**

1. Man of Aran
2. Bicycle Thieves
3. City Lights
4. Le Million
5. The Lost Patrol (Ford)
6. Green Pastures (Keighley)
7. Brief Encounter
8. All About Eve (Mankiewicz)
9. Blue Express (Trauberg)
10. The Heiress (Wyler)

**PAUL DEHN (Britain)**

1. Metropolis (Lang)
2. Testament of Dr. Mabuse (Lang)
3. City Lights
4. Man who Knew too Much (Hitchcock)
5. Citizen Kane
6. Open City (Rossellini)
7. Odd Man Out (Reed)
8. Henry V
9. Orphée (Cocteau)
10. On the Town (Kelly-Donen)

**CATHERINE DE LA ROCHE (Britain)**

1. City Lights
2. Childhood of Maxim Gorki
3. La Règle du Jeu
4. Sciuscia (de Sica)
5. Arsenal (Dovzhenko)
6. Nothing Sacred (Wellman)
7. Casque d'Or (Becker)
8. Hail the Conquering Hero (Sturges)
9. Miss Julie (Sjöberg)
10. On the Town (Kelly-Donen)

**CAMPBELL DIXON (Britain)**

1. Sous les Toits de Paris
2. Les Enfants du Paradis
3. All Quiet on the Western Front
4. Frenzy (Sjöberg)
5. Gold Rush
6. Variety
7. Brief Encounter
8. Bicycle Thieves
9. Childhood of Maxim Gorki
10. Rashomon

**JACQUES DONIOL-VALCROZE (France)**

1. Que Viva Mexico
2. Dames du Bois de Boulogne
3. Intolerance
4. La Terra Tremava (Visconti)
5. Sunrise
6. Magnificent Ambersons
7. Jeanne d'Arc
8. Monsieur Verdoux
9. The River (Renoir)
10. Les Dernières Vacances (Leenhardt)

**LO DUCA (Italy-France)**

1. Jeanne d'Arc
2. Man of Aran
3. La Grande Illusion
4. Gold Rush
5. Bicycle Thieves
6. Greed
7. Les Enfants du Paradis
8. Paisa (Rossellini)
9. Henry V
10. Citizen Kane

"This is not an absolute choice, but each film has been picked in relation to the other nine . . ."

**LOTTE H. EISNER (France)**

1. Monsieur Verdoux
2. Gold Rush
3. Birth of a Nation
4. Potemkin
5. Greed
6. L'Age d'Or
7. Zero de Conduite
8. Earth
9. Tabu
10. Louisiana Story

**RICHARD GRIFFITH (U.S.A.)**

1. Nanook of the North
2. Intolerance
3. Moana (Flaherty)
4. Warning Shadows (Robison)
5. Arsenal
6. So This is Paris (Lubitsch)
7. Monsieur Verdoux
8. Paris 1900 (Vedrèse)
9. Hallelujah! (Vidor)
10. The Wedding March

"The order doesn't mean anything particularly."

**JYMPSON HARMAN (Britain)**

1. Gold Rush
2. City Lights
3. Intolerance
4. Best Years of our Lives
5. Gone With the Wind (Fleming)
6. Man of Aran
7. Sous les Toits de Paris
8. Brief Encounter
9. On the Town
10. Red Shoes (Powell)

**CURTIS HARRINGTON (U.S.A.)**

1. Greed
2. Zéro de Conduite
3. La Règle du Jeu
4. The Devil is a Woman
5. Vampyr (Dreyer)
6. L'Age d'Or
7. Dura Lex (Kuleshov)
8. Never Give a Sucker an Even Break (W. C. Fields)
9. A Nous la Liberté!
10. Dames du Bois de Boulogne (Not in order of preference)

**PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE (Britain)**

1. End of St. Petersburg
2. Jeanne d'Arc (Pudovkin)
3. Love of Jeanne Ney (Pabst)
4. Student of Prague (Galeen)
5. La Bête Humaine (Renoir)
6. Grapes of Wrath
7. Citizen Kane
8. Los Olvidados
9. Orphée
10. Casque d'Or

**PENELOPE HOUSTON (Britain)**

1. L'Atalante
2. Citizen Kane
3. City Lights
4. Dames du Bois de Boulogne
5. Earth
6. The General (Keaton)
7. Grapes of Wrath
8. Greed
9. October
10. La Règle du Jeu (Alphabetical order)

**THEODORE HUFF (U.S.A.)**

1. Intolerance
2. Broken Blossoms
3. Way Down East
4. Mark of Zorro (Fairbanks)
5. Madame Dubarry (Lubitsch)
6. Der Letzte Mann (Murnau)
7. City Lights
8. A Nous la Liberté!
9. The Informer (Ford)
10. Day of Wrath (Dreyer)

**SIRIOL HUGH JONES (Britain)**

1. La Règle du Jeu
2. Citizen Kane
3. Le Jour se Lève
4. Letter from an Unknown Woman (Ophuls)
5. Orphée
6. Zéro de Conduite
7. Miracolo a Milano
8. City Lights
9. Los Olvidados
10. Long Voyage Home (Ford)

**B. IDESTAM-ALMQVIST—“Robin Hood” (Sweden)**

1. Assassinat du Duc de Guise (Calmette)
2. Keystone farces (Chaplin)
3. Arne's Treasure (Stiller)
4. Cabinet of Dr. Caligari
5. The Ancient Law (Dupont)
6. The Covered Wagon (Cruze)
7. October
8. Le Jour se Lève
9. Henry V
10. Prisons (Bergman)

**SIEGFRIED KRACAUER (U.S.A.)**

1. *The Joyless Street*
2. *M (Lang)*
3. *La Chienne (Renoir)*
4. *Le Million*
5. *Lonesome (Fejos)*
6. *Potemkin*
7. *Paisa*
8. *Gold Rush*
9. *Louisiana Story*
10. *Los Olvidados*

**GAVIN LAMBERT (Britain)**

1. *Greed*
2. *Earth*
3. *L'Age d'Or*
4. *La Règle du Jeu*
5. *The Kid (Chaplin)*
6. *A Diary for Timothy (Jennings)*
7. *The Quiet Man (Ford)*
8. *Hallelujah!*
9. *Que Viva Mexico*
10. *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*

**HENRI LANGLOIS (France)**

1. Chaplin's 1916 films
2. *Gold Rush*
3. *Intolerance*
4. *Birth of a Nation*
5. *Queen Kelly (Stroheim)*
6. *Potemkin*
7. *Que Viva Mexico*
8. *Monsieur Verdoux*

**FRIEDRICH LUFT (Germany)**

1. *Gold Rush*
2. *Potemkin*
3. *City Lights*
4. *Le Jour se Lève*
5. *M*
6. *Louisiana Story*
7. *Maskerade (Forst)*
8. *The Blue Angel (Sternberg)*
9. *Miracolo a Milano*
10. *Jeux Interdits (Clement)*

**ROGER MANVELL (Britain)**

1. *Bicycle Thieves*
2. *Childhood of Maxim Gorki*
3. *City Lights*
4. *Fires were Started*
5. *La Grande Illusion*
6. *Grapes of Wrath*
7. *Isole nella Laguna (Emmer)*
8. *Le Jour se Lève*
9. *Louisiana Story*
10. *Odd Man Out, On the Town, Oxbow Incident (Wellman), Song of Ceylon (Wright), Sous les Toits de Paris, Zero de Conduite*

"I can only play the 'choice' game if I can break the ten rule . . . List in alphabetical order."


**CLAUDE MAURIAC (France)**

1. *Birth of a Nation*
2. *Gold Rush*
3. *Que Viva Mexico*
4. *Magnificent Ambersons*
5. *La Règle du Jeu*
6. *Espoir (Malraux)*
7. *Bicycle Thieves*
8. *The Fallen Idol (Reed)*
9. *Miss Julie*
10. *The River (Renoir)*

**GENE MOSKOWITZ (U.S.A.)**

1. *Greed*
2. *Le Jour se Lève*
3. *City Lights*
4. *Grapes of Wrath*
5. *L'Age d'Or*
6. *Love of Jeanne Ney*
7. *The Blue Angel*
8. *L'Atalante*
9. *Bicycle Thieves*
10. *Childhood of Maxim Gorki*

**EBBE NEERGAARD (Denmark)**

1. *Birth of a Nation*
2. *Mutual films, Easy Street, The Cure, The Pawnshop, The Immigrant (Chaplin)*
3. *The Phantom Carriage*
4. *(Seastrom)*
5. *Feu Mathias Pascal (L'Herbier)*
6. *Storm over Asia (Pudovkin)*
7. *Drame de Carne (Carne)*
8. *The Little Foxes, Day of Wrath, Bicycle Thieves, Miracolo a Milano*

**DILYS POWELL (Britain)**

1. *Easy Street*
2. *The General*
3. *Grapes of Wrath*
4. *Henry V*
5. *Intolerance*
6. *Louisiana Story*
7. *Le Million*
8. *Los Olvidados*
9. *Olympiad Festival of Nations (Riefenstahl)*
10. *Orphée*

"I refuse to list in order of preference. Alphabets before honours."

**JEAN QUEVAL (France)**

1. *The Pilgrim*
  2. *Bicycle Thieves*
  3. *The River (Renoir)*
  4. *Louisiana Story*
  5. *Que Viva Mexico*
  6. *Guernica (Resnais)*
  7. *A Propos de Nice (Vigo)*
  8. *Joie de Vivre (Gross)*
  9. *Dots (MacLaren)*
  10. *Le Tonneller (Rouquier)*
- "The Brussels referendum made fascinating nonsense. . . . Since I thrive on nonsense, this is my list . . . a subjective, humble selection through which I pleasantly recall the lasting impression made upon me by works I like."

**TERRY RAMSAYE (U.S.A.)**

1. *The Durbar (Urban: British Kinemacolour documentary)*
2. *Intolerance*
3. *One A.M. (Chaplin)*
4. *Potemkin*
5. *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*
6. *The Big Parade (Vidor)*
7. *Odd Man Out*
8. *All that Money can Buy*
9. *Cavalcade (Lloyd)*
10. *All About Eve*

**ROGER REGENT (France)**

1. *Gold Rush*
2. *Broken Blossoms*
3. *Louisiana Story*
4. *Greed*
5. *Potemkin*
6. *Hallelujah!*
7. *Le Million*
8. *Hamlet (Olivier)*
9. *Quai des Brumes (Carné)*
10. *Dreigroschenoper*

**KAREL REISZ (Britain)**

1. *All Quiet on the Western Front*
  2. *L'Atalante*
  3. *City Lights*
  4. *Earth*
  5. *Le Jour se Lève*
  6. *Listen to Britain (Jennings)*
  7. *Miracolo a Milano*
  8. *Los Olvidados*
  9. *The Palm Beach Story*
  10. *Wagonmaster (Ford)*
- (Sturges)  
(Alphabetical order)

**PAUL ROTHA (Britain)**

1. *Greed*
2. *Potemkin*
3. *Gold Rush*
4. *Italian Straw Hat*
5. *Turksib (Turin)*
6. *Earth*
7. *Kameradschaft (Pabst)*
8. *L'Atalante*
9. *Open City*
10. *Bicycle Thieves*

**MILTON SHULMAN (Britain)**

1. *Intolerance*
  2. *City Lights*
  3. *Bicycle Thieves*
  4. *All Quiet on the Western Front*
  5. *Brief Encounter*
  6. *Nothing Sacred*
  7. *Potemkin*
  8. *Stagecoach*
  9. *Night at the Opera*
  10. *The Blue Angel*
- (Marx Bros.)  
(Not in order of preference)

**ERIK ULRICHSEN (Denmark)**

1. *Grapes of Wrath*
2. *Zéro de Conduite*
3. *Les Enfants du Paradis*
4. *Easy Street*
5. *Listen to Britain*
6. *Vampyr*
7. *Menschen am Sonntag*
8. *Horse Feathers (Marx Bros.)*
9. *The Ox-Bow Incident*
10. *C'est L'Aviron (MacLaren)*

**MARIO VERDONE (Italy)**

1. *Potemkin*
2. *La Grande Illusion*
3. *Bicycle Thieves*
4. *Italian Straw Hat*
5. *Tabu*
6. *Louisiana Story*
7. *Arne's Treasure*
8. *The Pilgrim*
9. *Les Enfants du Paradis*
10. *Hallelujah!*

**WILLIAM WHITEBAIT (Britain)**

1. *Gold Rush*
2. *City Lights*
3. *Modern Times (Chaplin)*
4. *Shoulder Arms (Chaplin)*
5. *Great Dictator (Chaplin)*
6. *Easy Street*
7. *The Immigrant*
8. *The Kid*
9. *One A.M.*
10. *Monsieur Verdoux*

**RICHARD WINNINGTON (Britain)**

1. *Childhood of Maxim Gorki*
2. *City Lights*
3. *Zero de Conduite*
4. *Bicycle Thieves*
5. *Turksib*
6. *Le Jour se Lève*
7. *Italian Straw Hat*
8. *Greed*
9. *La Grande Illusion*
10. *Nothing Sacred*

**ARCHER WINSTEN (U.S.A.)**

1. *Farrebique*
2. *Stars Look Down (Reed)*
3. *Our Town (Wood)*
4. *Bicycle Thieves*
5. *Day of Wrath*
6. *Odd Man Out*
7. *Henry V*
8. *The Asphalt Jungle (Huston)*
9. *Maedchen in Uniform (Sagan)*
10. *Man in the White Suit (Mackendrick)*

# FURTHER NOTES ON A RENAISSANCE

Gavin Lambert

**A**BOUT eighteen months ago I wrote a series of notes in *SIGHT AND SOUND* on the Italian cinema's renaissance since the war; I hadn't seen all the films, from the late 20's onwards, necessary to offer something more conclusive, and the notes deliberately focussed more on individual figures than on collective developments. In this sequel, the approach is the same. With the addition of some new films seen recently (including those shown at the Italian Film Week in London during June), and of some further information on present conditions in Italy, I hope the original perspective may be widened a little further.

The direct native roots of what is loosely called neorealism lay, to recapitulate briefly, in Camerini's "populiste" romantic comedies of the 30's, on the credit titles of which can be found many names—notably de Sica (as actor), Zavattini and Castellani (as writers)—later to become important. Also in the 30's, Visconti was Renoir's assistant, on *Partie de Campagne* and *Les Bas Fonds*, and Rossellini was making a transition from instructional documentaries to official patriotic films. In a sense, the division between de Sica, Zavattini, Castellani, and other Italian film-makers, remains today; even though the phenomenal Zavattini, as well as collaborating with de Sica on all his best films, scripted Visconti's last film and has written several times for Blasetti. But the de Sica-Zavattini films, and Castellani's, remain above all those of humanist inspiration, while Visconti's development has been more formal, less committed, and Rossellini, after coming to terms with Fascist demands seems to be doing the same for the Vatican.

Speaking in Chicago on a recent visit to America, de Sica remarked that the "neo-realist" movement in Italy could in many ways be said to have finished: not because it had been abandoned but because it had been extended so far as to deny classification. One can't, after all, group *Miracolo a Milano*, *Due Soldi di Speranza*, *Bellissima*, under any collective heading and expect much illumination. Their three leading directors have, of course, been primarily interested in various kinds of poor people living in Italy today; but in *Miracolo a Milano* de Sica uses fantasy with as much freedom as Méliès or Clair to point a conclusion he has described as "desperate," while Castellani's latest film has an exuberant, affirmative vitality culminating in a finale as joyously sentimental as the best Capra, and in *Bellissima* Visconti refrains from direct comment (in a script that seems to encourage it), offering rather a hard, detached closeness of observation.

These three films—and de Sica's *Umberto D.*, which I have not yet seen, but which is apparently more bitter than anything he has done before—are a long way from the immediately postwar productions such as *Open City* and *Vivere in Pace*, which made the first "neo-realist" impact abroad. In perspective, this impact seems to have come more from a sudden



"*Miracolo a Milano*."

attack on actuality, at a time when it was out of fashion, than from any statement of common sympathies and methods. Of course the physical methods—location shooting, non-professional players—were shared, and in many cases still are, but the use and effect of them has become increasingly individual. In some cases "neo-realism" was little more than a bandwagon for anyone to climb on, to be cutely commercialised by Zampa, or to be used as a stepping-stone (final destination unknown) by Rossellini. More important, perhaps, were the social conditions these film-makers shared: the collapse of Mussolini's nationalised cinema and its restrictive production code, and the economies of location shooting with post-synchronised sound, which meant a relative freedom from orthodox financial problems. These considerations have seldom operated simultaneously in one country. Nor do they, to the same degree, in Italy today.

## II

*De Sica and Zavattini.* In their first film, *I Bambini ci Guardano* (1943), the child is adrift only within his immediate society—a mother with a lover, a father who commits suicide, unsympathetic guardians—and left, lonely and inarticulate, at boarding school. In *Sciuscia* (1947) the pressures are wider and stronger, and through the destruction of innocence and trust in two young boys is suggested the over-reaching cruelty of postwar life, the shame of a society adrift. In *Bicycle Thieves* (1949), the child is as inarticulate again as in *I Bambini ci Guardano*, but he is only part of the film's centre. The story works continually on two levels: the

relationship with the father—for the child, the only one of which he is aware; his father's relationship to the world, described in the search for the bicycle. Unlike *Sciuscia*, the interior world remains strong, and at the climax of adversity father and son are drawn more closely, rewardingly together.

In *Miracolo a Milano* the child grows up. He comes to the world, after a fairy-tale orphaned boyhood, full of wonder and faith. He greets everyone with a "Buon Giorno!" and means it, though few believe him. The world for Toto is no more than a cold, barren waste of ground outside a big city, where the poor and the dispossessed live in makeshift huts, chase the wintry sun's elusive beams, and display towards each other an instinctive goodness, humility and love. And now the view dramatically extends, the emphasis shifts. In *Sciuscia* and *Bicycle Thieves* "society" has been, for the poor, an unfriendly but blind force, corrupted by millstone pressures, but not innately evil. In *Miracolo a Milano* "society" is personified in the onslaught of monstrous and greedy financiers, grotesquified in the manner of Clair's *A Nous la Liberté!* but with a far more intense power. Oil is struck on the desolate squatting-ground, the poor are ordered to leave; the capitalists produce a tear-gas squad to turn them out. Toto's old foster-mother, who adopted him as a foundling, comes down from heaven and gives him a magic dove, but not even magic can save the poor on this earth. At the end, it can only enable them to fly on broomsticks away to a better land, where "Buon Giorno!" really means "Buon Giorno!" where "the goodness of humble people and the unaffectedness of children," as de Sica describes them, are prized.

De Sica has called the film a fable, and it has the purity, the simple magic, the moral truth, of the best. What is extraordinary is how he and Zavattini have managed to combine with their fierce satire and "desperate" conclusion the lightest of fairy-tale elements, with traditional miracles like the apparition of presents for all the poor folk, the gas repelled by the magic dove, the old lady taking french leave from heaven, pursued by two beautiful angels. In construction the film is imperfect, not all the trickwork comes off, the wonderful unity and sureness of the prologue, with its account of Toto's adoption, the death of his foster-mother, the funeral, are never quite recovered; but the feeling is unflawed, and the fault is only one of congestion in the middle passages, where almost too many elements are combined—the financiers, the attempt to displace the poor, the magic and its individual

effects, the love story of Toto and the servant girl Edwige, the old lady and the angels. The idyll between Toto and Edwige, when they discover their love for each other and in an ecstasy of hope and happiness climb up and down flagpoles at immense speed, has a transfixed lyrical quality that reminds one of Chaplin's dream in *The Kid* in its sudden communication of delight and freedom.

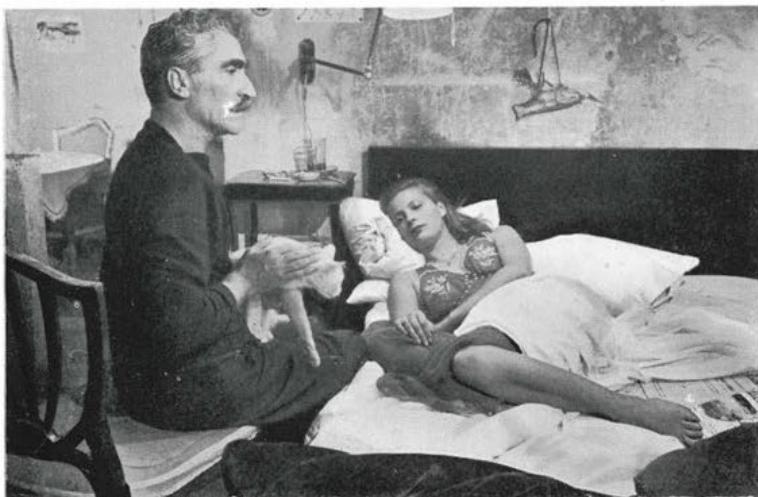
Zavattini adapted this film from his own novel, *Toto il Buono*, written in 1943, and it is the only de Sica-Zavattini collaboration to have its source in an original story by Zavattini. It may be that the fantasy style of *Miracolo a Milano* springs primarily from the writer, and there is a limited parallel with the Carné-Prévert films; until *Le Jour se Lève* these were written by Prévert from somebody else's story, and then with *Les Visiteurs du Soir* the whole mythology was Prévert's. In Zavattini's case, though, the departure entails none of the sacrifices of *Les Visiteurs du Soir*. The authentic riches are still there, and the earlier manner is, it seems, returned to in *Umberto D.*, a naturalistic study of the loneliness and desperation of old age.

Perhaps no film since *City Lights* has seemed less bitter in spite of its bitterness (the same is apparently not true of *Umberto D.*). De Sica transfigures poverty without sentimentalising it. With the exception of Rappi, the soured derelict who attempts to betray the down-and-outs to the financiers, the faces and characters of the poor are those of innocence and beauty, caught and reflected in such diverse things as the lovely plainness of Toto and Edwige, so perfectly played by Francesco Gòlisano and Brunella Bovo, in the childish greed of an old man who wins a chicken in a raffle, in a row of beggars watching the sunset.

*Umberto D.*, marks the end of the de Sica-Zavattini collaboration. De Sica's plans are uncertain. A new Zavattini subject, *Italia Mia*, a series of sketchbook impressions, has been taken over by Rossellini. There are possibilities for de Sica of a film in America and a collaboration, unexpectedly, with Ben Hecht. There are suggestions of official pressure on the increasing "pessimism" of his films. It may be that the separation from Zavattini is not itself the turning point, but a symptom of it; at all events the cycle of poverty explored, from the child to the pitiable old *Umberto D.*, would seem to be complete.

*Castellani*. With *Due Soldi di Speranza* (1952), he looks like becoming a major minor director; this vivacious pastoral is the richest and most perfectly balanced of all his films. The fourteen-year-old Carmela, ferociously determined to marry the young peasant of her choice, is perhaps Castellani's most endearing creation. Infinitely simple and cunning, helpless and resourceful, enduring the screaming mockery of village girls and the cruel opposition of her father, she has about her a quite indomitable quality. Castellani's women are usually more determined than his men, the younger ones passionate and demanding, the older ones dominating mothers or heavy flirts. In *Due Soldi di Speranza* there are all kinds, including the hero's mother, practically toothless, endlessly chattering, complaining, quarrelling, and a plump, lonely, middle-aged widow who owns a small chain of cinemas, all showing the same copy of the same film, reels whisked in frantic succession from one to the other. These are the sharpest portraits. The softer ones, an old village sexton, Antonio's wronged sister, are equally remarkable. Nearly all of them are played, with immense spontaneity, by non-professionals.

The two sides of Castellani, the ruthless and the tender, the comic and the tragic, working simultaneously throughout his films, crystallise at the end of *Due Soldi* into a climax



Rossellini's "L'Envie," in "Les Sept Péchés Capitaux." Artist (Orfeo Tambori), mistress (Andrée Debar) and cat.



*Two recent films. Mother (Magnani), child and dramatic teacher in Visconti's "Bellissima," and, right: a scene from de Sica's "Umberto D."*

absolutely characteristic yet with a new, romantic, almost fairy-tale quality. Having secured her lover, Carmela is thrown out of the house by her parents; neither of the young people has money or work; Antonio responds by shouting his indifference, passionately tearing the dress from Carmela's back, insisting that he wants only her, nothing from her parents. The two of them stand in a state of infuriated elation in the village square. Then the villagers come to their rescue. The young people are newly clothed and shod, laden with little presents, wished well, and set out to seek their fortune elsewhere. Apart from themselves they have only two pennyworth of hope; tears and laughter are, as usual, both there, but with a heightened intensity and an irresistible charm.

Castellani's young peasants setting out along the road to happiness seem a long way from de Sica's desperate poor people, longer than the distance from the city to the countryside. The shadow of disillusion has not fallen across these lives. There is no war, only a few guerrilla skirmishes, with "society"; the poverty and hardship of peasant life is accepted with a shrug, the answer lies in individual pleasure and fulfilment.

Castellani shoots his films entirely on location, with a small unit; his style, riotous and intimate, is unmistakable. His vitality seems boundless, and he has the most youthful temperament of the Italian directors. With a characteristic capacity to surprise, though one can understand the appeal of the subject, he is now working on a version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, translated by himself, with settings by Léonore Fini.

*Visconti.* His new film, *Bellissima* (1951), is a departure. After *La Terra Trema* (1948), a large and sombre fresco of the poverty of Sicilian fishermen, Visconti planned to adapt Pratolini's "Tale of Poor Lovers," a subject of related sympathies. This project had to be abandoned, and he did several stage productions (Shakespeare, Brecht, *Death of a Salesman*) before embarking on a new film. *Bellissima* is a dramatic comedy about a lower middle-class woman in Rome, played by Anna Magnani, determined to get her child on the movies. A famous director (effortlessly played by Blasetti) is about to audition child stars for his new film; the

mother, against the father's wishes, slaves to pay for her daughter's dramatic tuition. At the moment of the film test, the child is terrified and starts to scream hysterically. Later, watching from the projection box, her mother is brought face to face with this pathetic, ugly, desperate image, while the production unit in the theatre roar with laughter. The mother is appalled, bitterly angry with herself and the cruelty of people who make films; there is a long scene in which, passionately caressing her daughter, she reproaches herself and asks the child's forgiveness. A final twist follows, with the director deciding after all that a plain child is what he wants, and the mother refusing the offer.

In many ways the film is dazzling. Visconti creates a richness and variety of surface, packs every scene with a virtuoso accumulation of detail and effect. The narrative drives sharply through, completely assured, numerous minor characters are introduced with fresh and clear observation, and the atmosphere is always masterly. The violent bustle and noise of the studio, with eager mothers fretting over their children; a children's ballet class presided over by a retired but agile ballerina; an open air cinema at night, with people watching *Red River* on a remote screen, the dialogue carried in less than a whisper; a dreary tenement block in a suburb—all these are dramatically fixed and printed, with an immense care also devoted to the soundtrack, which is never dead for a moment. All kinds of sounds, from the huge, frightening studio babble to the faint, barbed notes of a piano in a tenement apartment, are densely orchestrated.

Yet this style, for all its brilliance, gradually reveals its inspiration as exterior. There is a coldness, a mechanical quality, at the film's centre, which seem to be shared equally by director and star. The part is a showcase for all of Magnani's talents, but her opulent display of technical fireworks finally kills its reality. The lower middle class housewife becomes a prima donna in her own right; the result is fabulous and increasingly false. It creates a vacuum about itself. The closing scenes—the monologue to her daughter on the street bench, the reconciliation with her husband, the passionate refusal of the film company's offer—lack warmth and conviction. At the moments when the human relationships should seem most intense and solid, they seem most remote.



"La Città si Difende": the flight from the city. Fausto Tozzi, Cosetta Greco.

This emotional withdrawal is the reverse of the Visconti of *La Terra Trema*, in which everything—the fine heroic groupings, the mournful landscapes, the slow absorbed rhythm and the heavy, penetrating texture—pointed to a close and deeply sympathetic assimilation of the material; and the flaw of this film, its wandering and inchoate narrative, is not repeated in *Bellissima*. One guesses that Visconti was not really engaged by the subject, that he responded firstly to a technical challenge. It is certainly a much less personal achievement than his previous work.

### III

Other recent activities have been very variable. Most notable perhaps is Malaparte's *Cristo Proibito* (1951), a completely isolated phenomenon. Malaparte came to the cinema with a considerable reputation as a gifted and picturesque writer, and his film, which I wrote about in an earlier issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, is powerful and gripping, not free of meretricious elements, with many audacities, successful and unsuccessful, typical of an outsider's first experiment. It was a disastrous commercial failure, and Malaparte's return to the cinema is problematical. He wanted to film "Lysistrata," but the plan was abandoned, and he has returned to journalism.

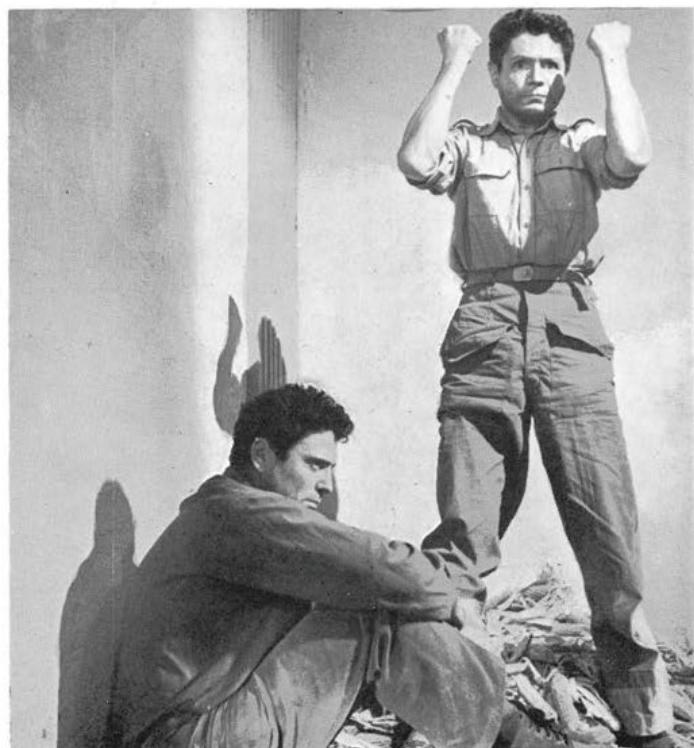
To a Franco-Italian misadventure called *Les Sept Péchés Capitaux* (1952), to which various directors contributed a sketch dramatising a deadly sin, Rossellini gave *L'Envie*, from a story by Colette. An artist's young mistress, mysteriously perverted by an almost abstract envy, is even jealous of her lover's exquisite white cat, and manages to engineer its death. The mismanagement of this promising material really appalls. The sketch is handled in Rossellini's most careless impromptu style, without dramatic shape or grasp. Emmer's *Ragazzi di Piazza di Spagna*, the story of three Roman working girls, continues the episodic approach of his charming *Domenica d'Agosto*, with an increase of technical accomplishment and a sad loss of freshness. Lattuada's two recent films, *Luci del Varieta*, a comedy about a travelling variety troupe, and *Il Cappotto*, a free adaptation of Gogol's "The Cloak," are made with his usual conscientiousness and integrity; the first had some clever sequences, the second is handsomely mounted, but both—like his earlier films—have an academic stiffness about them, a lack of vitality.

Pietro Germi's work was first introduced here by *In Nome della Legge* (1949). This story of the Mafia in Sicily during the last century had some atmospheric qualities, but was weighed down by story conventions. More recently he has made *Il Cammino della Speranza* (1950), about an adventurous trek to France by unemployed Sicilian miners, and *La Città si Difende* (1951), a melodrama in the style of *The Naked City*. Again these films have qualities, but they are derivative and burdened with convention; Germi does not seem to have found a personal style, nor material in which he is sufficiently confident not to sensationalise it. The opening scenes of *Il Cammino della Speranza* make obvious reference to Visconti. There are moments of genuine feeling, of solidity, in the handling of the central couple, finely played by Raf Vallone and Elena Varzi, and some of the minor characters, but conventional banditry, knife-fights and sentimentality are always intruding. *La Città si Difende* is heavily influenced by American melodrama, though again the treatment of the unemployed worker who turns to gangsterdom, the flight with his family, his death in the countryside, was not without distinction.

Antonioni, whose *Cronaca di un Amore* (1950) suggested gifts perhaps superior to any of the younger directors, has not yet completed a new film, but is now at work on *Our Children*, a study of postwar adolescents, made in three countries, Italy, France and Britain. Among makers of short films, the talent of Francesco Maselli must be mentioned; his *Bambini* showed usual delicacy and feeling.

### IV

At the end of the first series of these notes, I postponed any kind of general summary, except to suggest that "neorealism" was in a state of transition, that the styles of de Sica and Visconti in particular were still incompletely evolved; these and some others were internal points, to which one might add now that *Bellissima* is the only example of a leading Italian director experimenting with studio realism.



Malaparte's "Il Cristo Proibito." Raf Vallone, Alain Cuny

On the wider question of the future, there is room for speculation. Film-makers of integrity are now finding it more difficult to work freely in Italy, a problem partly due to widening commercialisation of the medium, with more producers interested in quick money and many directors more adept than de Sica or Castellani at obliging. From a commercial point of view the situation in Italy is once more resembling that in most countries, where to make films of really outstanding quality involves a long and often disheartening struggle. At least the Italians still have cheapness of method on their side.

Another kind of influence, potentially more serious, is implied in a remarkable report in *The Nation* (August 3, 1952), by Henry Brill:

"Two American priests arrived in Rome late last month. One of them was the Very Reverend Monsignor John J. McClafferty, dean of the Catholic University in Washington. Until four years ago Monsignor McClafferty was head of the Legion of Decency, and he is still a dominating influence in it . . . His companion was Father Joseph Mahoney of Jersey City. The two priests were guided about the city by John Perdicari, Italian correspondent for *Film Daily*, an important American trade paper . . .

On July 24 Perdicari, Monsignor McClafferty and Father Mahoney held a half-hour conference with Eitel Monaco, head of the National Association of Italian Film Producers and of Italians Films Export. At this meeting Monsignor McClafferty proposed to Monaco, who has the backing of the Italian government, that the Italian industry, in order to 'avoid past errors,' should either have an American 'adviser' permanently station in Italy, to warn Italian producers against 'infringements of the American moral code' or send an Italian to the United States for orientation, who on his return would act in such a capacity. Monaco was receptive to the first alternative but told McClafferty that Italian producers and directors, who are unused to controls of any kind, would have to be carefully approached—they would not tolerate any kind of censorship. McClafferty replied that no question of censorship was involved. 'We feel,' he said, 'that by approaching the producer before a film is actually made we can point out to him certain things which are unacceptable to Americans.' Perdicari added that such an adviser would of course work hand in hand with Catholic

Action. Monaco then said that on this basis something could doubtless be worked out . . ."

Mr. Brill then recounts how McClafferty and Mahoney were shown Rossellini's new film, *Europe 1951*, which they found "beautiful," but objected to a shot of a naked baby and a weak characterisation of a priest, which they felt should be rewritten. "We have certain moral codes," Monsignor McClafferty explained, "in America which differ from those of, say, Japan or Italy. These moral codes must be defended and enforced."

United Paramount, Mr. Brill writes, an American circuit of some 800 cinemas, is interested in handling dubbed Italian product, and he feels that if this comes about, and if Italian producers accept the American Catholic code, films like *Bicycle Thieves* will no longer be made. This is more than questionable. A large American circuit is not likely to be interested in films such as *Umberto D.*, or *Bellissima*; on the other hand, it is inevitable that ordinary commercial Italian films angled for American distribution should be adjusted to American demands. Anything else would be bad business. The danger seems to be, rather, that Italian producers would aim under these conditions exclusively for large returns, which would mean not, as Mr. Brill suggests, that a *Bicycle Thieves* could not be made, but that nobody might be interested in backing it.

There is no evidence in the article that Americans are interested in stiffening censorship inside Italy. The powerful pressure groups inside America remain a direct problem only for Hollywood, an incidental one for foreigner producers interested in the American market. One can only hope that Italian producers will not fall into the trap of designing their films for a foreign market, the folly of which has been demonstrated before. The difficulties that de Sica, Visconti and others have experienced recently undoubtedly imply that the general Italian climate is less favourable than it was, but one cannot yet predict to what extent the renaissance may flounder on the rocks of the various pressures indefatigably at work in the cinema today.



Castellani's "Due Soldi di Speranza." Antonio (Vittorio Musolino) and his mother.

## **The Film Folio - I**

*Over the past forty years, many notable writers have in books and magazines contributed occasional pieces on the cinema. Some of these now seem dated and off the point; others maintain a surprising aptness and vitality. In the first of this series of reprints, for example, George Bernard Shaw—writing in a supplement on the modern theatre to "The New Statesman and Nation" of June 27, 1914—brings up a number of topics still under discussion today: the effect of films on children, the morality of commercial production, the need for a Film Finance Corporation.*

*Other projected reprints in this series include articles by Gordon Craig, Lillian Gish, Aldous Huxley, George Jean Nathan, Thomas Mann, Luigi Pirandello and Virginia Woolf.*

*Permission to reprint this article by Shaw has been granted by the Society of Authors and the Public Trustee.*

## **THE CINEMA AS A MORAL LEVELLER      George Bernard Shaw**

The cinema is a much more momentous invention than printing was. Before printing could affect you, you had to learn to read; and until 1870 you mostly had not learned to read. But even when you had, reading was not really a practical business for a manual labourer. Ask any man who has done eight or ten hours' heavy manual labour what happens to him when he takes up a book. He will tell you that he falls asleep in less than two minutes. Now, the cinema tells its story to the illiterate as well as to the literate; and it keeps its victim (if you like to call him so) not only awake but fascinated as if by a serpent's eye. And that is why the cinema is going to produce effects that all the cheap books in the world could never produce.

The cinema is cheap. For a halfpenny a boy is allowed to enter and sit out three films. For a penny he can stay the whole way through the entertainment. Not, of course, at the fashionable West End cinemas, but in the poorer districts, where all cinemas fill up their vacant seats in this fashion. The penny is often very well spent indeed. Take the not uncommon case of a child whose mother is out at work until late in the evening. To keep him out of mischief whilst she is away, she can either lock him in or lock him out. Usually she locks him out, preferring that the risk of his doing mischief and stealing food should be borne by other people. To a boy so situated the hospitality of a warm picture theatre with an exciting entertainment is priceless; and the work of begging the necessary penny is an occupation whilst the condition of pennilessness lasts. The people who are agitating to have children excluded from these theatres (they have actually succeeded in some towns in Germany) should be executed without pity. As to the magistrates who bind boys over not to go to the cinema, an intelligent Home Secretary would ask them whether it had ever occurred to them to consider the alternatives open to the boy: loafing at the street corner, for instance. As it is—

Nevertheless these people are not wrong in regarding the question of the morality inculcated by the cinema as enormously important. The cinema is going to form the mind of England. The national conscience, the national ideals and tests of conduct, will be those of the film. And the way in which the question is being tackled is very characteristic of our public life. Certain people who have never been inside a picture palace are alarmed at the hideous immorality of the film plays, and are calling out for a censorship and for the exclusion of children under sixteen. Certain others who, like myself, frequent the cinemas, testify to their desolating romantic morality, and ridicule the moral scare. And between the ignorant meddlesomeness of the one party and the *laissez-faire* of the other nothing sensible is likely to be done.

What neither of them sees is that the danger of the cinema is not the danger of immorality, but of morality. The cinema must be not merely ordinarily and locally moral, but extraordinarily and internationally moral. A film must go round the world unchallenged if the maximum of profit is to

be made from it. Ordinary theatres in London and Paris can specialise in pornographic farce because the relatively small class which tolerates and likes this sort of entertainment is numerous enough in huge cities to support one theatre. Such farces, if they go to the provinces, have to be bowdlerized either by omitting the objectionable passages or slurring them over. But a film cannot be bowdlerized: it must be as suitable for Clapham and Canterbury as for Leicester Square.

The result may be studied at any picture palace. You have what an agricultural labourer thinks right and what an old-fashioned governess thinks properly sentimental. The melodramas are more platitudinous than melodrama has ever been before. The farces, more crudely knock-about than any harlequinade ever enacted by living performers, are redeemed only by the fantastic impossibilities which the trickery of the film makes practicable. There is no comedy, no wit, no criticism of morals by ridicule or otherwise, no exposure of the unpleasant consequences of romantic sentimentality and reckless tomfoolery in real life, nothing that could give a disagreeable shock to the stupid or shake the self-complacency of the smug. In the early days of the cinematograph, when it was a scarce and expensive curiosity, some of the films were clever and witty. All that is gone now. The levelling down has been thoroughly accomplished. The London boy is given the morality of the mining camp; and the Chinese pirate has to accept with reverence the proprieties of our cathedral towns.

Now levelling, though excellent in income, is disastrous in morals. The moment you allow one man to receive a larger income than another you are on the road to ruin. But the moment you prevent one man having a more advanced morality than another you are on the same road. And here we are not concerned with the question of teaching the London boy the criticisms of current morality made by Nietzsche, Ibsen and Strindberg, by Barker, Brieux, Galsworthy, Hankin and self (pardon the popular phrase), nor the philosophy of Bergson. These authors would not be popular with children in any case. But it is quite a mistake to suppose that conventional morality is all of one piece the world over. London cannot live on the morals of the Italian peasant or the Australian sheep-farmer. What is more, high civilisation is not compatible with the romance of the pioneer communities of Canada. Yet commercialism forces such morals on the cinema.

The moral is, of course, that the State should endow the cinema, as it should endow all forms of art to the extent necessary to place its highest forms above the need for competition. The highest forms, like the lowest, are necessarily immoral because the morals of the community are simply its habits, good and bad; and the highest habits, like the lowest, are not attained by enough people to make them general and therefore moral. Morality, in fact, is only popularity; and popular notions of virtuous conduct will no more keep a nation in the front rank of humanity than

(Continued on page 96)

# THE EROTIC CINEMA

Curtis  
Harrington

Three embraces. Right: Jeanne Boitel and Maurice Maillet in "Remous." Below, left: von Stroheim in "Foolish Wives." Below, right: Elisabeth Berger and Anton Edhofer in "Der Traumende Mund."



THE great majority of films since the beginning of film history have contained their "love interest," and few confine themselves exclusively to other phases of human activity. In 1896, when the cinema was still a peepshow attraction, the great success in America was a protracted kiss sequence, already popularised in a stage play *The Widow Jones*, by May Irwin and John C. Rice (both approaching middle-age). As a basic drive, sex, with its innumerable social manifestations, serves the dramatist as a much more important and useful motivating force than the human needs for sleep, food and drink; hence it becomes, as a subject for investigation in relation to the cinema, one of almost unlimited scope. To observe the use of the film medium for establishing and conveying actual erotic tension, however, narrows the field considerably, for the "love interest" of most films is no more than a formal convention. It is the rare film

in which the director succeeds in conveying to the spectator a genuine erotic feeling between two characters; in the English-speaking cinema, particularly in Hollywood since the growth of censorship, it is rarer still.

If directorial treatment of sexual feeling most often confines itself to the banal or meretricious, certain personalities, often just by virtue of their own presence, have frequently gone beyond this in establishing an erotic power in their films. The star, indeed, is very often a personification of sexual attractiveness, and whether stars are influenced by larger social changes or whether it is they, once discovered, who serve to influence society (this still refers primarily to Hollywood, most notable for popularising sex appeal), the fact is that they demonstrate, when extremely popular, the current taste in what is sexually desirable. The huge success today, for instance, of Esther Williams, the swimming star, is due to her





very healthful erotic quality; she is totally unexotic, solid, attractive, attainable (the girl next door may well look like her), wholesomely sexy and cheerful in her tight-fitting bathing suits. Only a few years back Jean Harlow occupied a similar position, though her style was more artificial; it satisfied popular demand, however, and during her period the "platinum" blonde, rarely seen today, was legion. Wholly plucked, sexually desirable eyebrows appeared everywhere. Still a few years before this it was Clara Bow and the young Joan Crawford who were widely emulated—the flapper, Elinor Glyn's vivacious "It" girl, the "flaming" creature of jazz, short skirts and smart roadsters.

Alongside these figures who have owed their immense popularity to their sexual attractiveness, which corresponded to the majority ideal, one also finds some erotic *specialists*. These are always rather less popular because there is something disconcertingly exotic about them; but, as personalities, their appeal lasts within a more limited range for a longer period of time. They do not epitomise the girl next door, indeed they are the sort of figure that the man in the street strongly suspects he will never meet. Their element of strangeness gives them the larger stature of myth, and of a more significant erotic power. In this category may be included such extraordinary personalities as Garbo, Dietrich, Pola Negri, Lillian Gish (in her fashion), Mae West, Bergner, and, less notably, Viviane Romance, Jean Harlow, Carole Lombard, Hepburn, Crawford. All these actresses were established in silent films or during the early talkies. This points to an unfortunate truth; for the most part the cinema has ceased to discover and develop the really extraordinary. Most of Hollywood's younger stars today are rather difficult to tell apart, pretty and undistinguished idealizations of the most average sort of American girl, the style varying from rather mousy and "cute" to tiresomely "tough"—Debra Paget, Wandra Hendrix, Ann Blyth, Jean Peters, Anne Francis, Marilyn Monroe—the latter evidently a genuine new sensation with the American male and her latest picture, *Don't Bother to Knock*, in which she appears unexpectedly as a sexy but homicidal baby-sitter, enjoying a phenomenal success. Even those established in the 'forties were half-heartedly exotic, like Jane Russell or Lauren Bacall, the rearguard of a more vivacious cycle.

The sexual attractiveness exerted by the male star occupies historically a less notable position than that of the female, though it was widely cultivated in the 'twenties—above all by Valentino and by de Mille, specialist in "the technique of the torso" and the appeal of brute force; the American ideal, which seems now to have found popular acceptance in the Western world, has been established since the early 'thirties, when the "tough" lover, personified by Gable and Cagney, succeeded the "Latin" one (Valentino, Novarro). The type was aptly analysed, with reference to Cagney, by Lincoln Kirstein in the April 1932 issue of "Hound and Horn":

No one expresses more clearly in terms of pictorial action the delights of violence, the overtones of a semi-conscious sadism, the tendency towards destruction, toward anarchy, which is the basis of American sex appeal.

Today an actor like Marlon Brando, in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, though his ability is genuine and his characterisation vital, still personifies this ideal. The commercial exploitation of it has become increasingly coarse and ruthless. A few

*Early erotica. Top: Nazimova in "Salome" (1923), designed after Beardsley. Middle: Gloria Swanson in "Zaza," same year. Below: Italian primitive featuring popular hero Maciste, "Maciste all'Inferno" (1926).*

years ago it was rediscovered by Hollywood publicity men, when *The Great Gatsby* was released in 1949, that male sexuality can be sold as readily and directly as female. The film, a dull and inferior adaptation of the Fitzgerald novel, was advertised to the public by large, lurid reproductions of Alan Ladd stripped to the waist, and it so successfully sold the picture that there followed a whole rash of advertising schemes showing Tyrone Power, Sonny Tufts, Kirk Douglas—any male, indeed, with a presentable torso—similarly stripped. The method has now spread to Europe, equally indiscriminate. A recent example is the introduction of Keith Andes to the filmgoing public in Fritz Lang's potboiler, *Clash by Night* (1952). The young man's carefully developed torso was displayed at every opportunity throughout the film as well as on the posters, even when a pretext was clearly lacking. Both he and Marilyn Monroe, no doubt included in the film for the younger members of the audience to identify with (since the stars, Barbara Stanwyck and Paul Douglas, are over the forty age bracket), had little to do in the story except provide an added sexual interest.

This is the kind of erotic stimulation that so many ordinary films, particularly American ones, include; it seldom goes beyond the obviously meretricious, the catering to wish fantasies. There is a general understanding in Hollywood that films should contain a fairly generous supply of this kind of erotic interest, as a matter of sound business procedure. A few personalities, however, despite indifferent direction and scenarios, manage consistently to give their work genuine erotic power. Garbo, for instance, has been able to present the very essence of a type of intense, neurotic, passionate woman; the fact that her legend continues to grow rather than diminish since her long absence from the screen attests to her position as a romantic figure, an erotic ideal with deep, mystic suggestivity. In her *Camille* (1937), the intensity of passion she feels for Armand is communicated in so disturbing and moving a way that it reaches far beyond the sometimes questionable trappings of the lavish production that frames it. Earlier, in Clarence Brown's *Flesh and the Devil* (1927) she gave depth and reality to the role of a selfish, lustful woman who could only too easily have been interpreted in the standard "vamp" manner of the period. (It is a sign of the times that the same director now plans to remake this film—with Ava Gardner). Garbo's personal magic has almost invariably transcended its material.

Of the stars who manage to inject genuine feeling into meretricious material, many, unlike Garbo, who does not essentially date, are bound up with their period—though always less strongly than the average popular player. The changing fashions can be traced by beginning with the Gish and Mary Pickford school of forty years ago. Griffith, with his Victorian allegiances, made Gish into the essence of the helpless maiden whose virtue is constantly menaced by the low desires of the burly rapist. She was pure and sweet and childlike, but there was never any mistaking the erotic interest she aroused in her male admirers. A new type, the sexual villainess, reached its first apotheosis around 1917 with Theda Bara. Her first film, *A Fool There Was* (1914), remains a masterpiece of its kind, and reveals the considerable if unlikely personality of the "vampire" leading men irresistibly by her wanton desires on a downward path to utter destruction. The moral suggestion was that her kind of fascination is a product of pure evil, and a label of guilt and fatality stuck to the great sexual charmers until it was guyed by Mae West. However potent as a stylization Theda Bara's image was, it did not really have much to do with the sort of sexual



*Louise Brooks as Pabst's fatal, insatiable "Lulu" (1928).*

experience one meets in real life, and after the period of World War I, in a decade of growing sophistication, the type began to evolve. Bara's popularity faded, she was succeeded by more realistic, more "human" vamps: Barbara La Marr, known as "the girl who is too beautiful," in Rex Ingram's *Trifling Women* (1923), a lavish and decadent morality tale about a fatal woman (a remake of the same director's 1917 *Black Orchids*), Gloria Swanson in any number of films—especially those by the king of sex hokum, Cecil B. de Mille—and the unclassifiable Garbo, in *Flesh and the Devil*.

Alongside the maturing of the vamp there developed the more perfectly contemporaneous type, the jazz baby, personified by Clara Bow and the early Crawford. "The ruined woman," de Mille remarked at this time, "is as out of date as the Victorian who used to faint." The extraordinary attractiveness and vitality of Joan Crawford is already evident in *Our Dancing Daughters* (1927), and her long career since then is the outstanding example of a film actress changing and adapting her personality to suit changing fashions, erotic ideals. Clara Bow, on the contrary, unable to metamorphosize, quickly dropped from popularity with the arrival of sound, went out with the stock market crash and the depression. The early 'thirties ushered in the platinum blonde, personified by Jean Harlow, brash, vulgar and straightforward, pursuing sexual pleasure with much the same frankness as a man. Her more exotic and comic counterpart was Mae West, who though she entered films and achieved her immense national popularity during this period, had already been regaling Broadway with her unique personality for more than a decade. Her vehicles, "Diamond Lil" (filmed in 1934 as *She Done Him Wrong*) and "Sex," were self-authored. Her robust humour and frankness shocked an earlier generation of charmers—Mary Pickford announced she would blush even to quote the title line of the song "Diamond Lil"—and made it difficult to take following ones seriously. In perspective it makes the man-eater of Rita Hayworth in *Gilda* and Welles' *The Lady from Shanghai* (1949), films which are good examples of Hollywood's smoothest erotic *kitsch*, seem even more absurd.



## II

Dietrich is saved to the last because, like Garbo, she transcends any period, even though some of her films do not. Her style throughout the years remains constant, within little, characteristic variations, and as a personification of sexuality her lustre never dims. But as she first came to popular notice, she was very much the creation of her discoverer and director, Josef von Sternberg. Indeed, in general the directors who have concentrated on erotic theme material in the cinema are more considerable, more interesting and certainly more important than the personalities themselves. The most outstanding of these are Sternberg, Stroheim, Machaty, Pabst, Bunuel, and the little known Edmond T. Gréville; but Sternberg is the only one to have worked continuously with a single personality.

Sternberg first came into prominence with *The Salvation Hunters* (1925), a film that showed the influence of Stroheim's *Greed* (1923), but in which his individuality was already apparent. The film is best remembered for its poetic treatment of a sordid, depressing atmosphere—a more realistic, less attenuated approach than that accorded by Stroheim. In retrospect, however, the erotic overtones of the story and treatment reveal more of the director's particular taste. Much of the action unfolded in a house of ill repute in the slums, and



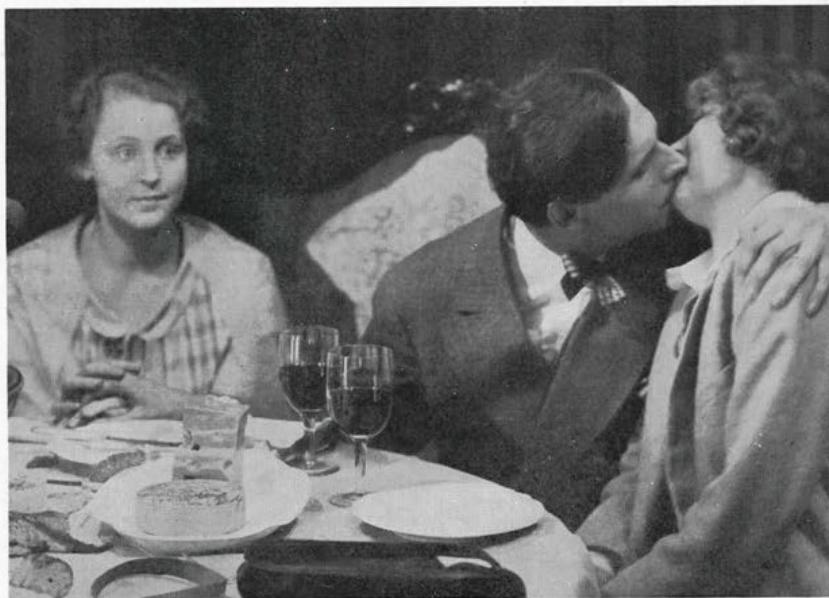
Sternberg's Dietrich. "Under Sternberg she reached an almost mythical stature, and her vehicles were exclusively concerned with the portrayal of female sexual power. She became a pure personification of the Fatal Woman of decadent literature." Above: in "The Devil is a Woman." Top left: "Dishonoured." Centre left: "The Scarlet Empress." Below left: "Morocco."

Sternberg showed a sense of genuine erotic tension in several sequences dealing with a young girl, a procurer and a prostitute. Sternberg is above all an exoticist, never a moralist. His preoccupation with putting sex on the screen seems at first to have been the result of an attempt to find a commercial compromise—a subject in which he could interest both himself and his audience. After he discovered Dietrich in *The Blue Angel* (1930), he gradually made her into his erotic ideal. Dietrich's creation of "Lola-Lola" in this film is a genuine, direct thing; in her subsequent characterisations under Sternberg she reached an almost mythical stature, and her vehicles were exclusively concerned with the portrayal of female sexual power. She became a pure personification of the Fatal Woman of decadent literature. The three last Dietrich-Sternberg films are especially revealing from this point of view.

*Blonde Venus* (1932), ostensibly a banal tale of mother-love, is interpreted with care by Sternberg as the story of a woman's extraordinary sexual capacity; she becomes a figure capable of any amount of metamorphosis, at once refined mother, demimondaine, low prostitute. Even Lesbianic desires are implied at last when, rejected by everyone, she loses even her adored child. The story of *The Scarlet Empress* (1934) was adapted from the pages of Catherine the Great's diary, recounting her rise to the throne. In Sternberg's interpretation this course of events becomes an allegory of a woman's rise to sexual



The erotic image. Above: "Extase," with Hedy Lamarr (then Kiesler), Aribert Mog. Top right: anti-romantic contrast, with "L'Age d'Or": Lya Lys disconsolate. Centre right: Edith Jehanne in "The Love of Jeanne Ney." Below right: first of the great "evil" vamps, Theda Bara in "Cleopatra."





Odious comparison. Betty Grable in, surprisingly, "Pin-Up Girl," and the real thing, Mae West in "Belle of the Nineties" (1936).

power. She is able to overthrow Duke Peter because he is sexually impotent, and because by sleeping with various members of the regiment of palace guards she gains their confidence. The film contains many remarkable moments of erotic tension, as when the young Empress, during her course of disillusionment (she arrives at first at the Palace as an innocent young girl), learns in the Queen's bedchamber that the handsome young Count Alexei is the old woman's lover. The culminating point of Sternberg's erotic-exotic series of films with Dietrich was reached with *The Devil is a Woman* (1935). This was adapted from Pierre Louys' story of a female sadist, "La Femme et le Pantin." In his personal adaptation Sternberg followed the original quite faithfully, but added an ending which made the film a more devastating study of perversity than its original. Set in a wholly imaginary, romantic Spain at the turn of the century, the cruel sexual domination of Concha Perez over her ageing lover is carried to a final extreme; after wilfully torturing him for years, when he is old, poor and ill, she has a chance to leave him and go with a new young lover to Paris. At the last moment she refuses to leave. To some audiences this suggested simply that she is going back, repentant, to comfort the old man. However, in these last scenes she is dressed, for the first time during the film, in black; she is really returning to drive him to his grave.

In 1941, six years later, when given the assignment of turning the old 1920 stage melodrama, *The Shanghai Gesture*, into a film, Sternberg characteristically wrote in a new character, a "Dr. Omar," and suggested that the downfall of the heroine was partly caused by her acute physical passion for this man, an implacable Levantine sensualist. The films of Sternberg are peopled with extraordinary romantic characters, set in a world which Lewis Jacobs has described as "made up of ravishing pictorial effects, peppered with lewdness

and suggestive symbols"; and their chief pursuit is often revealed to be after a fatal and destructive kind of erotic pleasure.

### III

Chronologically the other "von"—Stroheim—comes first. His early films, *Blind Husbands* (1919), *The Devil's Passkey* (1921) and above all *Foolish Wives* (1922) were extraordinarily frank and sophisticated in their treatment of sexual themes. *Foolish Wives* drew a sharp portrait of American guilelessness coming up against European decadence as personified by the bogus "Count Sergius." The story was almost wholly developed in sexual terms, describing the Count, played brilliantly by Stroheim himself, bent on seducing the wife of an American ambassador to Monaco. But this seduction provides only the main plotline, for the Count is also shown as having simultaneous affairs with two "cousins," who live with him in a seaside villa, and a middle-aged maid-servant; he meets his demise at last by attempting to rape a feeble-minded girl. It has been Stroheim's particular propensity to fill his films with characters with every sort of sexual deviation—Trina McTeague with her sensual passion for gold in *Greed* (1923), the shoe fetishist Baron Sadoja in *The Merry Widow* (1925), the mad naked queen in *Queen Kelly* (1929), the brutal and lustful Schani in *The Wedding March* (1928), Zasu Pitts as Boots Mallory's destructively jealous girlfriend in *Walking Down Broadway* (1932). (This last film was never shown except in a reshot and fumigated version as *Hello Sister*).

Stroheim creates a world where sexual desire is largely brutal, warping and cruel. The moments of romance in his films, as in the soft focus, cherry blossom enveloped love scenes between Mitzi, the working class girl, and Prince Nikki in *The Wedding March*, seem less convincing; they are ideal, dreamlike interludes in the direct tradition of Griffith, whose moral outlook he also shared. Far more authentic are the lust scenes, like the two great ones in *Greed*—McTeague's courtship of the virginal Trina by the railway depot, the wedding night scene—which, with its intense reiteration of a single theme from every viewpoint, remains his most powerful and effective work. Today his films still represent the closest analysis the cinema has offered of sexual depravity.

The second silent film of the German director, G. W. Pabst, *The Joyless Street* (1925), bears an affinity to Stroheim's bitter realism. It also stresses the erotic elements of the story, as do several other of Pabst's films, the best of them set against disintegrating European society of the 'twenties, with its often sadistic sexual indulgences: *Crisis* (1927), the story of a middle-aged woman tired of her wealthy husband and joining an orgiastic nightclub set; *The Love of Jeanne Ney* (1928), about an extraordinary romance between a French girl and a Russian communist; *The Diary of a Lost Girl* (1929), which recounts the decline of a chemist's daughter into prostitution and, most outstandingly, in what I suspect is his masterpiece, *Lulu*, also known as *Pandora's Box* (1929). There is a misconception, probably aroused by Paul Rotha's comments in "The Film Till Now," that *Lulu* failed because of some dislocation between the verbal conception of the leading character in Wedekind's play, and Pabst's filmic realization of her, with the American actress Louise Brooks. Today, at any rate, the character as she is realized comes across with absolute brilliance. Lulu is, first of all, Wedekind's conception: an amoral, sexually charged creature who must unwittingly cause the destruction of whosoever she touches. She is nothing less than the living essence of a deep, atavistic force, and she herself comes to an inevitable end, killed by a lust murderer.

By Louise Brooks' smile, a dance movement, a moment of

childish playfulness or petulance, Pabst establishes the deadly erotic fascination of Lulu with the sureness and exactitude of a surgeon wielding his scalpel. The director's hard, photographic realism is throughout at its height. One of the most significant moments concerns the character of Dr. Schon, played by Fritz Kortner, when he expresses with an intellectual, objective irony the hopelessness of his own situation. He is caught, he cannot escape, he knows it and remarks upon it—and we, the spectators, know it and believe it. The experience is like watching a post-Freudian casebook, a theoretical study of the destructiveness of desire, coming to life.

Like Stroheim's films, Pabst's of this epoch depict lust and violence with continual reference to social dislocations. The brothel in *The Joyless Street*, the Bolshevik orgy in *The Love of Jeanne Ney*—for this scene, Kenneth MacPherson reported in "Close Up," Pabst paid 120 Russian officers twelve marks a day to come in their uniforms, "supplied vodka and women, waited, and then calmly photographed"—Brigitte Helm's neurotic hysteria and the nightclub scenes in *Crisis*, the prostitute's party in *The Diary of a Lost Girl*: these episodes seem to crystallise the writhings of a lost Europe in the 'twenties.

Pabst's films, of course, fit into the greater pattern of the German cinema, and in any mention of films dealing with the erotic, Arthur Robison's *Warning Shadows* (1922) should not be overlooked. This fits nicely into the decadent tradition of late nineteenth century literature. It is a romanticised portrait of jealousy, carried to the extreme of absolute obsession. Told without the use of subtitles, it is wonderfully, macabrely evocative of the border regions of madness and desire. Unlike Pabst's films, however, it takes place in the expressionist fantasy world of so many German films of the period.

#### IV

The general erotic temperament of each country is reflected in each national cinema. But perhaps only Stroheim and Pabst have used the erotic for direct social condemnation or

comment; in other films, erotic themes become the varying expressions of a personal or a national temperament. In Soviet films sexual problems are hardly ever touched upon; in Sweden, they are represented with an uneasy mixture of alarm and fascination; in British films, they are politely evaded; in contemporary American ones, they are mainly exploited for commercial titillation; in the classic German cinema, they were bound up with cruelty and violence, whereas in French films the sexual climate has always been lighter and warmer. This was why, for instance, the French dialogue version of *Dreigroschenoper* with the genial Albert Préjean, fresh from a René Clair comedy, as Mackie, was so much less successful, and why Forster's heavier, brooding characterisation was so devastatingly effective. In French films sex is a frank, open element; they take it easy, just as the French themselves do.

The work of the French director Edmond T. Gréville (who acted in *Sous les Toits de Paris*) is of interest both because his films usually display a good sense of cinema (critics often find his work too self-conscious and arty, which it can sometimes be) and because of their treatment of sexual motivations. Like Sternberg, Machaty, Bunuel, his work has its own erotic climate. His early sound film *Remous* (1931) was a kind of "Lady Chatterley's Lover" set in France, in which a young woman's husband, shortly after their marriage, becomes impotent after an accident. In his description of the woman's need for a lover, Gréville shows himself above all a creator of atmosphere and the tension of the moment. In *Remous* he makes vivid the woman's mounting frustrated desire on a hot summer night when, unable to sleep, she goes out to the balcony of her hotel room and overhears lovers' moans from nearby. He uses a sequence of enlarging close-ups to establish the combined sexual current and enclosed feeling that gradually overwhelm the woman and a young man as they play a dance record in the tiny listening room of a phonograph shop.

Gréville has directed numerous films, many of them ordinary commercial works, in England and Germany as well as France, where he has been at his best. *Pour une Nuit d'Amour*



*Romantic and realistic lovers. Valentino as "Monsieur Beaucaire" (1924), and Jean Gabin, with Mireille Balin, in "Pepé le Moko" (1937)*



(1946) is from a story by Zola (very much like de Maupassant in quality), which relates how a young lady, supposedly an innocent virgin, has to get rid of the body of a lover whom she has killed in her bedroom. She secretly enlists the aid of the village simpleton, who admires her, promising him one night of love in return for his favour. Later she retracts her promise, and he confronts her at her wedding. With some sensuously diffused photography the film stylishly recreates a village atmosphere; Odette Joyeux and Roger Blin play notably well, and the suspense during the disposal of the body, the unpleasant eroticism of the motivations, are strongly captured.

A more intense mood piece is *Le Diable Souffle* (1947). This deals with a middle-aged man living alone on an isolated island in a river running between Spain and France. On a visit to Paris he rescues a young prostitute who is about to take her life; she returns with him to the island and becomes his wife. A young doctor, escaping from Spanish fascists, takes refuge on the island, and what follows is a working out of the triangular situation to a tragic conclusion. The girl's encounter with the island's crude existence is reminiscent of a similar situation in the desolate West in Seastrom's *The Wind* (1928); there are, indeed, affinities between the two films, only here the undercurrent of erotic awareness heightens the elemental effects of wind, rain and fog.

The complete erotic theme in French films is rare. An interesting sidelight, however, is the frequent portrayal of the frustrated and bitter, sexually undesirable ugly man contrasted with handsome young lovers. It is a recurring theme in the Carné-Prévert films, with Simon in *Quai des Brumes*, Pierre Renoir as the repulsive ragpicker in *Les Enfants du Paradis*, Jules Berry as the second-rate magician in *Le Jour se*

*Lève*; Simon has also played the role in Renoir's *La Chienne* and Duvivier's *Panique*. The French usually express their pity for these disgusting and discontented gentlemen. To them, sexual unattractiveness (an attitude quite different from the, at first glance, similar American feeling) is sadly tragic.

V

Bunuel's work abounds in the hard, strong erotic image and situation. His two early films, *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) and *L'Age d'Or* (1930), written in collaboration with Salvador Dali, made by private patronage and thus beyond all commercial considerations, are extraordinarily dynamic and explosive. Their violent sexuality is quite different from that in German films, more directly brutal and physical. In *L'Age d'Or*, during a society *fête* at which the sterility of the upper classes is generally mocked, hero and heroine meet by a statue and attempt a mutual seduction. Their inexperience, clumsiness and almost uncontrollable desire are described in pitiless detail, with music from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, on the soundtrack. The girl is left, her desire unsatisfied, with her mouth ferociously pressed to a toe of the statue. In his more recent work in Mexico, Bunuel continues to display a strong interest in the irrational force of erotic impulses. Moments like the young murderer's seduction of the mother of his friend in *Los Olvidados* (1950) and the frank, quickly satisfied desire of the young girl for the hero of *Subida al Cielo* (1951) are not easily forgotten.

The Czech director, Gustav Machaty, has been an erotic specialist with a richly romantic approach. The famous *Extase* (1933), though its style seems a little dated today, is a beautiful and poetic realization. Undoubtedly the climactic,

(Continued on page 96)



"Erotikon."

# The Current Cinema

## CASQUE D'OR (Golden Marie)

Reviewed by  
Lindsay Anderson

"Casque d'Or." Reggiani, Signoret.



Jacques Becker's films seem all to receive their peculiar impetus (they are nothing if not highly charged) from a searching, sympathetic fascination with doing and being. It is never a question of people in isolation. The Goupis' farm and countryside; the salons and workrooms of the *couturiers* in *Falbalas*; the Metros, Bon Marchés and bistrots of *Antoine et Antoinette*, and the hectic Left Bank locations of *Rendezvous de Juillet*—none of these backgrounds have been merely incidental. Instead, reflecting personality and influencing behaviour, they are assimilated into the stories, as much a part of the whole film as the characters or the incidents. Nor does Becker ever seem exposed to the opposite temptation—the exploitation of decor for its own effect. The elements are all fused (this at least is his intention) to form a unified, concentrated dramatic whole.

To have effected this fusion with *Casque d'Or* (English title: *Golden Marie*), is more than ever a proof of Becker's strictness of control; for this is his first "period" film, and in certain respects an avowed venture into the picturesque. The world that has excited his imagination is that of Paris fifty years ago—Paris of *Le Belle Epoque*, with all its attendant decorative charm. The social level of the story is low, its tone violent. Marie, its heroine, is a beautiful gigolette, nicknamed "Casque d'Or" from her glorious crown of golden hair which she wears dressed "*en casque*"; she is the mistress of Roland, one of a gang of cut-throats who operate under the orders of Léca—who himself desires Marie. But the rivalry which motivates the plot is not between Léca and Roland. Herself tiring of her lover, Marie's eye falls on Manda, a friend of one of the gang, an ex-convict now working as a carpenter at the riverside café which the apaches and their girls are visiting in the course of a Sunday outing to Joinville.<sup>1</sup> Marie gives Manda a lead, to which he instantly responds. From then on, his road leads precipitately to tragedy: the murder of Roland in a knife-duel; separation from Marie when Léca has his friend Raymond arrested for the murder, and Manda has no alternative but to give himself up; the death of Raymond when the two make a break from custody; Manda's vengeful murder of Léca, and his final ignominious death on the scaffold.

Becker is reported to have described the effect he has striven for as "something between the painter Renoir and Eugène Sue": an illuminating statement, if not one to be pressed too literally. The spirit of Renoir is present chiefly in the portrait of Casque d'Or herself, most obviously in her coiffure and dress, but also in her generous and challenging sensuality, her delighted response to the physical joy of love; and it is there as well in the presentation of the happier phases of the story—the slow procession of boats, oars dipping and voices singing, laden with apaches and their "filles", down the river at Joinville; and the pastoral idyll, with its blowing grass and trees, which is Marie's and Manda's short experience of life together. It is the other side of the drama, presumably, that

Becker wishes to evoke by his mention of Sue: the narrative of plotting and intrigue; Léca's gang with its code of "honour" and violence; the ruthless fights-to-the-death. But although there are conventional thriller elements here, all this is a far cry from *Les Mystères de Paris*. Sue's celebrated melodrama, chockful of the traditional apparatus of its genre—fair innocents, disguised monarchs, exuberantly coincidental encounters—is the sort of material that would justify an approach far less serious, and decoration far more wild (something like John Bryan's for *Oliver Twist*, perhaps). D'Eaubonne's sets for *Casque d'Or* and Robert Le Febvre's straightforward photography eschew the Gothic for a natural, though continuously atmospheric visual style; and this is matched by a *découpage* of corresponding sobriety. The story unfolds evenly, in a steady march, of gradual, overpowering effectiveness.

Firstly, it is a love story. His acute sensibility to what one may call the emotional geography, the varying currents and strange depths which characterise the most intimate human relations, has always been one of Becker's strengths; and just as this made of *Antoine et Antoinette* something more than a light comedy, so it lifts *Casque d'Or* from the category of melodrama, or merely another essay in the romantic-pathetic, to tragedy. Marie and Manda are characters vividly and roundly presented; their relationship changes and progresses, and as it progresses our insight into their situation deepens. This is not the director's achievement alone; he owes a great deal to his actors. The performances of Simone Signoret as Marie and Serge Reggiani as Manda are remarkable above all for their complete fusion, at a level of great intensity, of their own personalities and acting styles into a shared conception. The effect of unity makes it as impossible to imagine the film without these players, as to imagine it directed by anyone but Becker. Signoret's Marie, in particular, shows a radiant blossoming of talent: a creation entrancingly feminine, with a range of intuition that compasses the arrogant (and irresistible) wilfulness of the earlier sequences as persuasively as the later warmth of a woman passionately and constantly in love. Superbly confident in her power of attraction, it is she who dominates the first half of the film: her reckless provocation of Roland, her summons of Manda, her impudent encouragement of Léca's advances. Manda, seduced by a glance, fatally allows himself to be led back to the world of crime which he had resolved to put behind him. Once the two have become lovers, however, the balance shifts, to reveal the basis of truth in a relationship so doubtfully entered into.

Manda has been shown from the first as a secret man, driven in upon himself by harsh experience, inflexibly self-reliant. (Reggiani's performance, with its banked interior fire and its almost heroic renunciation of display, communicates exactly the strength and the weakness of this fine-tempered pride. This is resolutely interior acting, with the strength in it to afford the sacrifice of certain immediate effects, to achieve moments of subtle and startling



*Top: David Wayne and Charles Laughton in "The Cop and the Anthem," from O. Henry's "The Full House." Centre: Marjorie Fielding, Phyllis Calvert, Terence Morgan, in "Mandy." Below: Aldo Ray and Judy Holliday in "The Marrying Kind."*

revelation). With intimacy, it is Manda's influence that becomes dominant, his love for Marie still combined with an unswerving pursuit of his self-chosen course of action. Marie loses her stridency (with her *casque*); devotion replaces appetite and the cocotte becomes a wife. When the couple eavesdrop on a bourgeois marriage in the village church, it is she who finds herself affected by the solemn symbolism of the ceremony; Manda, a tender but unsentimental lover, is impatiently indulgent. And when Léca has his friend Raymond arrested for the murder of Roland, the same pride that won Manda his happiness with Marie forces him to sacrifice it. "*N'y pensez plus*," says Marie as she lies beside him in bed, knowing that he is thinking of his friend, "*Penses à moi.*" "*Je pense toujours à toi, Marie,*" he replies; but in the morning he has gone. It is the perfect harmony of these scenes between Marie and Manda, very soft and quiet (there are no dwelt-on passages of love-making), and above all their sense of promise as well as fulfilment, that give the end of the film, and their long tearing-apart, its peculiar quality of pain.

Equally, Becker has been able to present the scenes between Marie and Manda with absolute directness and simplicity. Dialogue between them is pared to a minimum; all but the barely essential has been excluded. Marie's seduction of Manda is told in three long panning shots as she waltzes across the room in front of him, cutting from her glowing self-display to his guarded eyes as they follow her past. When she has pursued him to his lodgings, his acceptance and their mutual desire is established without a word: one charged close-up on each, and an embrace. By contrast, it must be admitted that other passages in the film—the Eugène Sue element—lack this extreme clarity and subtle emphasis. Some of the plot manoeuvres (the events, for instance, after the duel between Manda and Roland, and the rather confusing glimpses of the informer) would benefit from a sharper exposition: in plot construction one feels that Becker and Jacques Companeez, as authors, have not always equalled the achievement of Becker the director. In part a certain lowering of the tension is due also to the shallower presentation (in comparison with Marie and Manda) of Léca. Claude Dauphin's performance is an admirably competent essay in callousness and vanity; but it lacks the extra dimension of personality.

Writing of Becker in 1947, on the strength of his first three films alone, the French critic Roger Régent remarked on the singular purity of his style, and on its power to build sequences to an extreme degree of tension. In *Casque d'Or* this style is more strikingly than ever in evidence. The movement of the whole picture shows a highly developed command of tempo, a rhythm which can accommodate the long, sustained look at a scene (the first set-up of all, for instance), as well as the series of swift, detailed glances. The images are of continuous but simple richness—in particular a poetic use of close-up such as is possible only to an artist who has achieved great sureness of his attitude, as of his métier.

While the outcome of the love between Marie and Manda lacks nothing in terror and pity, it provokes no protesting cry against society or destiny: the human responsibility is grimly accepted. This is in interesting contrast to the films of Carné and Prévert, and the impression is one of greater maturity. Manda is master of his fate as the Gabin-hero of *Quai des Brumes* or *Le Jour Se Léve* is not; and at his death there is no cutting away to ship's siren or to unheeded alarm clock. From beginning to end, in fact, the focus of the story is human: the procession of minor characters is socially as well as individually pin-pointed—the members of Léca's gang, each acutely differentiated; the undemonstrative loyalty of Bussières' Raymond; Dominique Davray as Marie's admiring girl friend: the crone at whose cottage the lovers take shelter (herself a grim *memento mori*); the anonymous wedding group at the village church. This last episode, with its perfect social and human observation, bears witness to Becker's admiration (lately admitted) of Stroheim, elsewhere evident in the fullness and accuracy of background detail.

Perhaps the most striking instance of all Becker's qualities in the film is the marvellous final sequence, of Manda's execution. Photographed in drab and chilling tones, this is shot with an unflinching precision, a masterly selection from the event of its most significant elements—the pale, tottering figure that expresses the brave man's agony and fear; the straps that bind him, and the dark figures that walk at his side through the hideous prison courtyard; the shining blade that descends; and, repeatedly, the sick face of Marie at her window—all these are seen with open eyes, not lingered over, but put there before us as facts from which there is no turning away. There are many chords of experience, beyond the common one of horror, set vibrating by the scene: separation and irrecoverable loss; the strength and the fragility of love, the

futile human protest against mortality. From Marie's bowed head the scene dissolves: ghosts from the past, the figures of the lovers, tightly clasped, waltz away down the bistro where they first met (the floor strangely distended and empty) into limbo.

## FULL HOUSE [Reviewed by Penelope Houston]

Following the fashion of the Somerset Maugham films, Fox have strung together five O. Henry stories in *Full House*, enlisting John Steinbeck to act as compère and provide the valued literary *cachet*. And, as with the Maugham adaptations, one is struck, whatever the level of treatment, by a sense of the writer's personality, of an individual colouring and flavour which unhappily shows up the prefabricated, dehumanised nature of so much contemporary screen writing. O. Henry wrote, of course, in the tradition carried on with less distinction by Woolcott and Damon Runyon: the "gimmicky" stories, balanced on the edge of an outrageous sentimentality and, full of that fascination with the wonders and strangeness of the big city which has no exact counterpart in our own literature.

The first story, *The Cop and the Anthem* (directed by Henry Koster), about a down-and-out who tries to get himself into jail for a comfortable winter, fails, braces himself to find work and then is arrested after all, makes a near winner. Charles Laughton, with the ragged grandeur, the ornate phraseology and, in the last scene, an authentic, unpredictable touch of pathos, gives the sort of personality performance one had almost ceased to expect from him; David Wayne, hopping at his side, marvelling at his exploits, most agreeably supports; and the timing is crisp and sure.

Two other enjoyable stories are *The Last Leaf* (Jean Negulesco) and *The Clarion Call* (Henry Hathaway): a rather stickily sentimental piece about an artist who kills himself in painting a leaf on a tree to please a dying girl, and a melodrama concerning an honest cop's determination to repay a debt before taking in the killer. *The Last Leaf* opens with a scene of considerable atmospheric quality—a winter night in Washington Square, the girl, turned out by her lover, stumbling home through the snow—which for once uses a tilted camera to effect. Anne Baxter and Jean Peters, the sick girl and her sister, play with practised emotional control, Gregory Ratoff gives an engaging display of Central European mannerisms and, if the treatment becomes a little flat in the closing scenes, the story remains likeable. The melodrama, restoring Richard Widmark to his old territory as the giggling, hysterical killer, viciously on edge, is cleanly and expertly told. The tune "Camptown Races," a clue to the killer's identity, makes an imaginatively handled accompaniment.

The other two cards in the hand are a good deal weaker. *The Ransom of Red Chief*, potentially the best of the lot, about the kidnapping of a monster child by two timid confidence tricksters who have to pay his father to take him back, drags and stumbles in Howard Hawks' disappointingly limp treatment. Smooth performances from Fred Allen and Oscar Levant—a well chosen pair of notorious grumblers—and a brief, delicious parody of the lack-lustre *milieu* of *Tobacco Road* only indicate what might have been done. The charming story *The Gift of the Magi*, unfortunately, completely misfires. Apart from the familiar impression that Hollywood has proprietary rights in Christmas, Jeanne Crain and Farley Granger sadly miss the freshness and humour of the young couple who try to give each other a happy Christmas, and Henry King, though the period sense attracts, has sentimentalised the little story out of existence.

As a whole, though, *Full House* can be enjoyed. The resources of a major Hollywood studio ensure technical quality that the Maugham pictures have never matched: light, agreeable handling of the period scene, efficient camerawork (notably from Joe Macdonald, who photographed *The Last Leaf* and *Gift of the Magi*), a generally sure sense of timing. The playing, except in the last story, is always competent, and in the cases of Laughton, Wayne, Widmark, Jean Peters and Oscar Levant rather more. The film shows, as others of the type have done, what good use skilled directors, not quite of the front rank, can make of this sort of material. Straightforward, sharp-edged story-telling is something the meandering habits of the average hundred minute feature too seldom encourage.

## MANDY

## Reviewed by Gavin Lambert

A fascinating book might be compiled on the handling of children in films. One would like contributions by, say, de Sica (on *I Bambini ci Guardano*, *Sciuscia*, *Bicycle Thieves*, *Miracolo a Milano*), by Donskoi on *Maxim Gorki*, Vigo on *Zéro de Conduite*, Ekk on *The Road to Life*, Chaplin on *The Kid*, Castellani on *Sotto il Sole*

di Roma, Bunuel on *Los Olvidados*, Kazan on *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, Crichton on *Hue and Cry* and *Hunted*—and by Alexander Mackendrick on *Mandy*. One common point would almost certainly emerge; that the relationship between directors and children in all these films was personal and not professional. Not all children are natural actors, and the worst ones probably go to dramatic school. Once they have been "taught" the barriers of mannerism and precocity are there, the relationship becomes professional and the result a hideous showing-off, an apeing of adults—like Shirley Temple, Margaret O'Brien, or the horrifying little nipper of *You're my Everything*.

What one can't tell from the outside, of course, is the total extent of the child's involvement. In films like *Hue and Cry* or *Plus de Vacances pour le Bon Dieu*, where the drama is kept to the children's level, the problem is relatively simple; the children can play out, spontaneously, a story they understand. But in other films the story calls for an imaginative reaction from children to incidents, experiences, that must be outside them—to adult intrigues for which they must find an analogy in their own lives. Exactly what emotional pressure obtained the scene between the boy and his mother at the end of *I Bambini ci Guardano*, the moments of wildness and hysteria in *Mandy*, the deadpan attack on the cripple in *Los Olvidados*, the extraordinary Sunday morning ritual of *Zéro de Conduite*? When is the child playing out a simplified drama,



Mandy Miller as "Mandy."

conveyed on its own terms, in which its reactions correspond to the actual drama, and when is one witnessing a moment of unrelated joy or pain, created so to speak from plastic material and inserted in a scene?

The other question is the personal relation between an actor and a child in the same film, to which the same rules of closeness must apply. One feels it between the boy and his grandmother in *Maxim Gorki*, between Coogan and Chaplin in *The Kid*, between Bogarde and Jon Whiteley in *Hunted*. (And what did Baby LeRoy think of W. C. Fields?). One doesn't feel anything of the same intimacy between Bobby Henrey and Ralph Richardson in *The Fallen Idol*, or the child and Magnani in Visconti's *Bellissima*. And, again, one wonders—a reflection of the film's emotional climate, or of the child, or the actor?

Something of this is raised by *Mandy*, by the contrast between the children's and the adult's scenes. Mackendrick has extracted from 7-year old Mandy Miller and, more briefly, the children of the Manchester Royal Residential Schools for the Deaf, playing of a rare directness and intimacy. The treatment of Mandy herself has great conviction and, at times, intensity, from the two early scenes—her terror before an angry van-driver, her encounter with children playing in a park culminating in her strange, animal shriek of uncomprehending fury—to the central and climactic passages in the school. (Here one extraordinary effect can be ascribed to plas-



"*Tora-no-o.*" The journey through the forest. This delicate and beautiful Japanese film stayed only a short while in London. Based on a legendary Noh play, its powerful acting, expressive groupings, and subtle tension make it as impressive as the same director's "*Rashomon*".

ticity: the dubbing of a deaf child's first attempts to speak on to Mandy). The deaf children, with their unnaturally alert faces, their sudden spurts of vitality and affection, their quick trust, their extraordinary patience with and politeness to each other and the adults, are wonderfully caught; one is taken into a new world, all the more subtly different for being in so many ways the same. In these scenes, building up to Mandy's first hysterical utterance with her mouth pressed to a balloon, the film sustains an emotional power by means which are never illicit, and come from intuitive grasp and understanding.

The pity is that *Mandy* is not a whole in itself. Adapted by Nigel Balchin and Jack Whittingham from an eager novelette called "The Day is Ours," the film is lamed rather early by the conventional "adult" drama built round the problem of parents who discover their young daughter is incurably deaf. Basically the issues suggested are convincing—Harry, the weak and vacillating father who, backed by a dominating mother, feels a sense of social shame and expresses it by trying to hide the child from the world, Christine the mother who is desperately anxious to find help—but they are lost in a chain of heavy contrivances. Situation becomes coincidence: an innocent embrace is surprised not far from the kitchen stove, and Harry arrives in Manchester on the one evening in six months that his wife and Searle, the head of the school, are having dinner together. All has to be tidied up—there is not even any attempt to motivate the mother-in-law's change of heart—for a reconciliation.

All this, though it has a few effectively handled scenes, notably the first real quarrel between Harry and Christine, sadly encumbers the film's centre. It says much for the strength of this centre that it so clearly survives. (The most serious vacuum, from this point of view, seems to be the absence of feeling in the relationship between Mandy and her father). *Mandy* is Mackendrick's third film, and though less complete than his two comedies, its best things are the most substantial he has done. Apart from its human qualities, it has a narrative emphasis that does not simply point a difference of comedy and drama. The style seems much more "engaged." The rather fragmentated approach, the swift and often bold transitions, suggest at first the child is to be handled in a manner similar to *The Fallen Idol*; in fact it comes to convey a sense of strong camera participation, unlike the more phlegmatic long takes and movement within the frame of *The Man in the White Suit*. There is much use of close-up, alternated skilfully with group shots in deep focus. In the family scenes, the combination of descriptive background and foreground analysis gives a double impression—of space, of characters isolated from each other in a large room, and, in the close-ups, of oppressive confinement. If the material here had been stronger, the result would probably have been very impressive, and as it is these scenes at least gain interest from decisive handling. Much of the camerawork (Douglas Slocombe) is striking, though at times it appears inflexible; there should surely have been more contrast in the images of the shabby Manchester scenes and the London house. The editing (Seth Holt), though, has an attack both consistent and sensitive to the demands of the material.

Of the adult performances, one must single out Dorothy Alison's beautiful sketch of the young teacher, with its feeling of gentle dedication and love. Jack Hawkins as Searle is given a few opportunities that are not conventional, and takes them; Phyllis Calvert and Terence Morgan, as the parents, aren't and don't. The soundtrack did not need William Alwyn's rather insistent support, for it is unusually detailed and has, in its own right, moments of really imaginative composition.

### FILMS FROM GROUP 3

*Reviewed by Edgar Anstey*

The release of three further films from Group Three—*Time Gentlemen Please!*, *You're Only Young Twice* and *The Brave Don't Cry*—provides us with sufficient material to attempt a first assessment of the Group's achievements.

The principal reason for Group Three's establishment was that it should divert a modest part of the British Film Production Fund into a channel providing feature film experience for technicians untried in that field. An examination of the credit lists of the five films so far completed suggests that this is being done. Three directors inexperienced in feature films have been used, together with two cameramen, an editor and several other technicians who have never before taken full professional responsibility on a story-film of feature length. Almost all of these film-makers have come from documentary.

But Group Three has been more than a training ground. Films made for not more than a quarter of the normal first feature cost are competing in the cinema for first feature billing, and if the prices being paid by exhibitors for Group Three films are commensurate with their co-feature and first feature status they should be comfortably paying their way.

There are, however, more interesting considerations than those of training or finance. Has Group Three succeeded in finding new areas of activity, or are its films complying with standard formulae? Most people will agree that *The Brave Don't Cry* is the Group's best production to date. It differs from the rest of the work in being a documentary. Montagu Slater has taken the records of the Knockshinnoch disaster and extracted from them the story of more than a hundred miners cut off in the galleries of a Scottish mine by an earth subsidence from a sodden field. The action moves between the gaunt, trapped faces in the half-dark and the waiting women at the pithead. The domestic tragedy at the surface is less successfully handled than the drama below; but the film equals *Kameradschaft* in dramatic intensity and surpasses it in credibility. The acting—mostly from members of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre—is forceful without being theatrical. Philip Leacock—a recruit from documentary—has handled the cast with assurance and sensibility. *The Brave Don't Cry*—in spite of its curiously arrogant title—ranks among the best British films and comes at a time when British production needs to be brought back to earth. The temptation to moralise has everywhere been resisted. The film has been content to report the human values rather than garb them in the latest political fashion.

The rest of Group Three's work is in a completely different manner. Such films as *Time Gentlemen Please!* and *You're Only Young Twice* are at the opposite extreme from documentary naturalism: they approach fact from minus infinity. Yet they are concerned with the world as they find it; there is social criticism wrapped up in the fantasy.

It is in this type of film that the Group apparently proposes to find its characteristic style. Comparisons with the Ealing comedies immediately come to mind, but these are less valid than might at first appear. Although the Group Three productions are "contrived," even story-ridden, they preserve a freedom to deviate from the norms of literature or the theatre and then to overstep the bounds of their own fantasy.

*Time Gentlemen Please!* (from R. J. Minney's novel *Nothing to Lose*) tells the story of a village with a record of productivity and full employment spoilt only by a lovably incorrigible tramp. An impending visit by the Prime Minister encourages the more strait-laced members of the community to take action against the idler. He must be put to work so that the visiting public relations officers from Whitehall can display to their master an English community impeccably industrious. As a result of their persecution the tramp is roused to activity. By cunning rather than work he becomes master of the village and agrees in the climax to accept the post of official mattress tester in the local factory. The satire is at the expense of public relations officers and village busy-bodies. And—an unconventional twist—the *nouveau riche* owner of the local factory is on the side of angels. The twist is typical. Here and elsewhere it delights Group Three to remind us that most of the clichés of modern comedy belong to pre-war society.

The third of the new films—*You're Only Young Twice*—has been harshly treated by many critics, but to me is the most interesting of the Group's productions. The film is from James Bridie's play *What Say They?* which in its turn is based on the story of Ahasuerus, Mordecai and Haaman in the book of Esther. Bridie translated the biblical story to a Scots university and for Jewish self-assertion substituted the wild moments that decorate and illuminate the grey solemnities of northern learning. In the film the dialogue and action are at times so apparently irrational and yet in truth so fresh and free and right that at first viewing I was reminded of *Zéro de Conduite*. The comparison seemed less valid at a second viewing when the film's slow start handicapped it, but the underlying spirit of *You're Only Young Twice* compensates for weaknesses of construction. (If the joke is good who cares that economy imposes a badly matched cut?). This film does well to remind us in its manner as well as its matter that exuberance as well as discipline may lead towards maturity. In a letter to *The Times* Walter Elliott describes the film as "a documentary of the spirit." Here is a film that cannot fail to delight the discerning but open mind, wherever it is lucky enough to find that rarity.

Perhaps the strongest characteristic of *You're Only Young Twice* is the film's kindness, and kindness may prove to be the Group's principal contribution to current film comedy (as well as the principal handicap to its social criticism). Cross-examined about Hayman's final, disarming smile in *You're Only Young Twice*, John Grierson readily admits that this was added because during the making of the film he had become over-fond of the villain of the piece.

Many people had expected that John Grierson and John Baxter would provide us with documentary realism in the Italian manner. Instead (and with, no doubt a backward glance to Baxter's *The Common Touch*) Group Three has done something equally difficult—and in the long run of more value to the industry; they have faced up to the need cheaply to provide British entertainment which would stimulate and amuse the regular cinemagoer. It appears to me that something characteristically British is emerging. Equally important is the existence of a group of film-makers, a school, already strong enough to be sufficiently identified by such a humble label.

## LES ENFANTS TERRIBLES

*Reviewed by Gavin Lambert*

This was, perhaps, a project that could never succeed. Cocteau's novel, written in 1929 when he was still at the St. Cloud clinic undergoing an opium cure, is an extraordinary achievement, full of a rich perversity. There is not much story, only a few episodes in the strange lives of an adolescent brother and sister, both fair, pale, disturbed and boyish, incestuously devoted to each other, living, quarrelling, rampaging, inventing exotic rituals in their "chambre"—an untidy, littered and claustrophobic den, its walls covered with programmes and magazine cuttings, photographs of



"The Brave Don't Cry." A scene at the pithead\*

"film stars, boxers and murderers." Elisabeth and Paul go to the seaside when their mother dies, and in a bourgeois hotel the outside world makes its first real impact on them. They make two friends, Agathe and Gerard, who visit them in their next home, an uncle's house, enormous as a palace, where they screen off one corner of a gallery to make a new "chambre." Jealous of their friends, unable to accept any love except the one they bear for each other, unable to emerge from their feverish interior world which the "chambre" so vividly reflects, the adolescents finally and melodramatically choose death.

The adaptation of *Les Enfants Terribles* (distributed in England by Continental-Concord) was made by Cocteau himself, and directed in 1950 by Jean-Pierre Melville mainly on the stage of the Théâtre Pigalle, with the interior of the "Populaire" building in Paris used for the uncle's house, and a few locations. It is difficult to suggest how the entranced, enclosed dreamworld of the children, as Cocteau describes it, might be represented in the cinema; the novel is written in a poetically distilled, allusive prose, held together by mood and interior concentration and not narrative structure. An admission of defeat seems to be implied in the passages of commentary, taken from the novel and spoken by the author over various episodes in the film. At times the film seems to be trying to be no more than a series of animated illustrations, determined by a literary text; the direction is stiff and chilly, fatally lacking passion. A Bach-Vivaldi concerto used as musical accompaniment underlines the effect of remoteness, its particular formal quality appearing quite alien. Nor is the acting, apart from Nicole Stephane's Elisabeth, which has the right overheated quality, at all good. Edouard Dermithe looks right as Paul, but plays awkwardly, and the rest are oddly incompetent. The doubling of Dargelos the schoolboy and Agathe by Renée Cosima seems an irrelevant trick.

One guesses that Cocteau conceived the film as a series of illustrative episodes to his novel, and though if well executed this would still, probably, have been unsatisfactory, the arty, embalmed effect achieved by Melville's direction could not be further from its original spirit.

## IN BRIEF

**THE HAPPY TIME** (a Stanley Kramer production for Columbia) and **THE MARRYING KIND** (Columbia) are lightweight American films that provide agreeable entertainment. The first, adapted from a Broadway success, in turn adapted from a novel, is the story of a French-Canadian family in Ottawa during the 20's. Its youngest member, Bibi, is celebrating his twelfth birthday; meanwhile, the others pursue their usual occupations, mainly amorous. The heyday in the blood, in this family, begins early and ends late. An elderly uncle indefatigably pursues an eligible widow, a dashing young one flirts with a pretty housemaid; these and related activities provoke Bibi's own adolescent stirrings, which come unexpectedly to a head in a scene with his viciously puritanical schoolmaster.

This acutely written episode is out of balance with the affectionate comedy of the rest. Although at times there is a tendency to too much *Oo la la!* and Tiomkin's ever-so-Gallic score intrudes, *The Happy Time* generally engages with its charm and vitality. It is well acted by Charles Boyer, Dalio, Louis Jourdan, Marsha Hunt and Bobby Driscoll, has a rich gallery of eccentric minor characters, and is directed by Richard Fleischer with ease and lightness.

*The Marrying Kind*, written by Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin, directed by George Cukor, is in format something like *Antoine et Antoinette*, but keeps to the surface, to which these practised collaborators give a *New Yorker* polish and gloss. Its young married couple are observed with little real psychological or social insight; the level is that of the Hepburn-Tracy films, and the tone throughout too urbane for the later "drama"—death of a child, unemployment, separation—not to appear glib. Still, there are some amusing scenes, and the playing of Judy Holliday and Aldo Ray is always enjoyable to watch; both are talented, sympathetic and lively. As an intelligent imitation of life the film is quite persuasive.

—James Morgan.

**THE SOUND BARRIER** (*British Lion*) confirms, if further proof were needed, that David Lean is one of the most accomplished technicians in British films; the flying sequences, above all the effective introduction before the credits, convey a genuine fascination with the material. One kind of craftsman, they suggest, is appreciating another kind. But everything else is much less congenial. Terence Rattigan's script is loaded with contrivance and commonplace: Sir John, the aviation pioneer, who puts "knowledge" above human sacrifice, his rebellious daughter who does the reverse, has her baby just after her husband is killed, but is finally converted, the frightened son who doesn't want to fly and crashes to his death, etc., etc. The handling of all this is perplexingly glacial—indifferent, one would say, in spite of the time devoted to it. There are no emotional tensions, and only two minor performances by Denham Elliott and Joseph Tomelty really communicate character. The script also raises an important issue—the moral responsibilities of scientific invention today—and dismisses it with unacceptable glibness. This is, really, a machine age film, remote in its human fictions, released and free only in some striking aerial images.—Gavin Lambert.

It would probably be misguided, though tempting, to find in **ANNI DIFFICILI**, retitled here *The Little Man (Film Traders)*, and **LES MAINS SALES** (*Regent*) evidence as to national temperament. The Italian film, the story of the reluctant Fascist, bullied into joining the Party, seeing his son called up for one campaign after another and, finally, losing his own civil service job because he lacks the political *savoir-faire* of the old hands, is in approach essentially a-political. The real business of life is elsewhere; the grumbling, ineffectual liberals appear no less ridiculous than the self-important Fascists. The subject demands responsible treatment, but the Zampa technique, extracting easy pathos from the tribulations of the "little man," easy sniggers from the panoply of

Fascist officialdom, hedges, evades, refuses to accept the responsibility of a personal statement. The scenes, for instance, in which the malcontents chuckle over Italian military defeats cannot but appear profoundly humiliating: these men, one feels, are traitors without the dignity of a cause. Whether Zampa's film should be taken as a gesture of repentance or as an apologia—either interpretation appears justifiable—it leaves a singularly unattractive impression.

Sartre's *Les Mains Sales* (seen in England as *Crime Passionel*) was, on the other hand, a taut, well-made political melodrama, sugaring its intellectual argument with a number of effective stage tricks. In Fernand Rivers' pedestrian screen version, which adds a few unnecessary plot twists to the early stages but sacrifices something of the key relationship between Hugo and his childish, excitement-demanding wife, a good deal of the stage tension has been lost and we are thrown back on the political argument. Hugo and Hoederer, the young *bourgeois* idealist and the seasoned Communist politician, are manoeuvred through their equivocal relationship in a way that, oddly, reminds one of the remote artificiality of another play about a delayed assassination, Cocteau's *L'Aigle à Deux Têtes*. Sartre's political symbols, however, could have been better interpreted than they are here: Pierre Brasseur's mannered, quizzical performance misses Hoederer's essential power of command, and Daniel Gélin seems a little lightweight for a part built up on neurotic tensions. The ironic denouement, the shift in Party policy which makes Hoederer's murderer a traitor yet permits him the characteristic justification of accepting, with his own death, the responsibility for his action, makes a satisfactory stage resolution rather than a significant political statement. The play, ultimately, conveys force without depth and in this version some of the force is missing.—Penelope Houston

**THE CAPTIVE CITY** (*United Artists*), **THE NARROW MARGIN** (*R.K.O.-Radio*), and **CLASH BY NIGHT** (*Wald-Krasna for R.K.O.*). These three melodramas typify Hollywood's superior middle level, though the most pretentious, the only 'A' picture, *Clash by Night*, is the least successful. Adapted from a bottom-drawer play by Clifford Odets, and competently put together by Fritz Lang, its steamy waterfront triangle has a certain dated 30's charm, but not even the highly assured playing of Robert Ryan, Barbara Stanwyck and Paul Douglas can infuse it with real life. Other decorations include Marilyn Monroe and Keith Andes, sultrily loitering. *The Narrow Margin* is a very slick little "B" picture with a train setting; a detective is escorting from the East to the West coast a gangster's widow, key witness in a state inquiry, and has to protect her from various thugs. Produced by Stanley Rubin and directed by Richard Fleischer, who has made films for Kramer (*So This is New York*, *The Happy Time*), it has good pace and craftsmanship, and a story with plenty of gimmicks but too many loose ends.

More interesting than either of these, *The Captive City* is a modest, neatly constructed thriller about the network of interstate corruption—mainly illegal bookmaking concerns—investigated by the Kefauver Committee, as it affected one American small town. At considerable risk to himself, a newspaper editor (very capably played by a new actor, John Forsythe) uncovers some picturesque intrigues and racketeers. The style is fairly orthodox dramatic journalism, but the film is unusually honest and presents some alarming implications. Robert Wise efficiently directed, and the script, apparently based on his own experiences, was written by Alvin Josephy Jr., now a contributing editor of *Time*.—James Morgan.

Difficult to find, because they are not usually advertised, but worth searching for, are several U.P.A. cartoons in current circulation (all distributed by Columbia). In London the Cameo Cinema, Charing Cross Road, recently held a "Magoo" week, which one hopes may be repeated in other newsreel theatres. As well as the brilliant *Rooty Toot Toot*, shown at the Edinburgh Festival, cartoons now on release include *Family Circus*, a light Freudian satire in which a little girl's jealousy of her baby brother is expressed in nursery drawings; *Madeline*, by Ludwig Bemelmans, with a delicious Parisian setting; and *The Grizzly Golfer*, in which the indefatigable Magoo attempts to play golf. In their rejection of the photographic approach adopted by most contemporary cartoons, their elegant stylisation and civilised wit, these 7-minute films make about the best adjunct for which one could wish to a cinema programme.

"The Sound Barrier." Ralph Richardson, Ann Todd.





## RED PLANET MARS

Science fiction on the screen has for the most part confined itself to pretty fantasies of the destruction of the world, to interplanetary travel and the trips to earth of tin-suited creatures both menacing (*The Thing*) and benevolent (*The Day the Earth Stood Still*). The apocalyptic fancies of a curiosity named, rather ominously, *Red Planet Mars* are of a very different order. The "scientific" element here is modest enough, being merely the establishment of communication with Mars by means of an instrument looking rather like a television screen; but this device opens the way to an extravagantly strange view of world affairs.

A young scientist and his wife (played with melancholy intensity by Peter Graves and Andrea King) make what they assume to be contact with Mars. Politely answering questions as to their economy, the Martians announce that they have a life expectation of three hundred years, feed a thousand people for a year on the produce of half an acre and employ atomic power. This, incidentally, fits the customary pattern of these interplanetary exchanges, in which Earth rarely comes off best: The Thing and his kind have superhuman mental powers, while a sort of 21st century Ideal Home atmosphere hangs over the planets. The messages, unfortunately, throw world agriculture and industry into disorder, causing strikes, riots and mass unemployment. Why they should do so—or, indeed, provide more than a few days' headline reading—the film does not explain, preferring to illustrate these happenings through some casually assembled library material.

At this point, however, the Martian messages take on a strange tone of moral uplift, paraphrasing the Sermon on the Mount and chastising the Earth for the neglect of Christ's teaching and pre-occupation with war. The reaction—as immediate, as improbable, and shown with further resort to library material—takes the form of a mass religious revival. The Russian government is overthrown by (for all the film shows us) a few senile patriarchs who have spent the winter evenings listening to the Voice of America broadcasts; an aged priest, installed as ruler of the new Russia, and congratulated by the British ambassador, promises to withdraw troops from Eastern Europe and to free prisoners.

This curious but happy state of affairs, however, is endangered by the arrival at the Americans' laboratory of an ex-Nazi scientist who has been employed by Moscow to listen-in on the Martian communications from his eyrie in the Andes. Drunk, demented, anti-American and given to

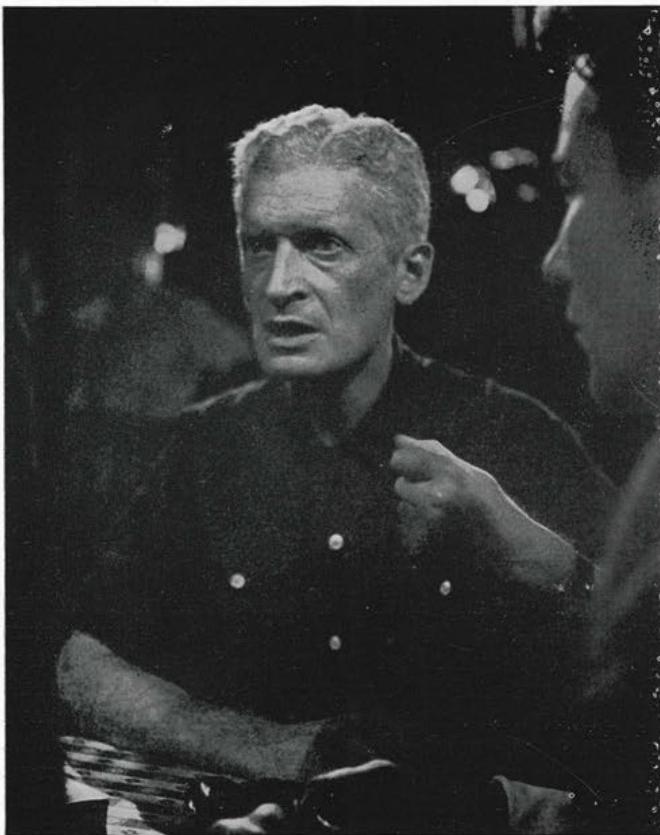
## Penelope Houston

invoking Satan and Lucifer, this all-out figure of villainy claims to have faked the messages himself to disrupt western economy and threatens to reveal the fraud. In a scene weighed down with well-worn theatrical devices, the scientist blows up himself, the transmitter and the Americans just as a final message from Mars, proving the presence there of what the synopsis refers to as a Supreme Being, begins to come through. The President of the United States (whom the film has none too subtly indicated to be General Eisenhower) gives the American pair a funeral oration which, were one not by now stunned beyond reaction, might be considered blasphemous.

*Red Planet Mars*, released by United Artists, directed by the former art director Harry Horner and written with crude excitability by John L. Balderston (whose experience in the fanciful includes both *Dracula* and *Berkeley Square*) and the producer, Anthony Veiller, offsets its pretensions as to content by a style which ineptly combines a certain theatrical artiness with the more familiar influences of the gangster B picture. Common sense, logic and taste are equally lacking; the question of how intelligible messages could be exchanged, for instance, is brushed cheerfully aside with the assumption that the U.S. Navy's coding services can cope with any emergency; the economic panic defies credibility; the Russian revolution, as represented by a few aged peasants digging up a box containing priest's vestments, appears merely pathetic.

At the expected moments the script introduces familiar but none the less unappetising items of contemporary screen ideology: the caricatured Russian government by thugs and rugged Red Army women, the wild picture of the villain, equating Nazism, Communism, drink and the devil, and the clap-trap discussions as to the scientist's responsibility for the outcome of his inventions.

The pretentious shoddiness of a film which appears to suggest that Christ should issue statements from Mars with the specific purpose of bringing about the downfall of Communism (cf. the last message, "Well done, thou good and faithful servants") passes too far beyond reasonable boundaries for the tolerant amusement usually accorded such undertakings. If made sincerely, the film's lack of restraint and reason merely embarrasses; if as a stunt, it alarms. One hopes that *Red Planet Mars* can be regarded as an isolated piece of silliness rather than as a symptom of things to come: tin suits and aluminium rockets are safer than an appeal to the planets to redress the balance of the old world.



Laslo Benedek. Photo: John Swope.

## PLAY INTO PICTURE

### Laslo Benedek

WHEN Stanley Kramer assigned me to direct Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* as a motion picture, I approached the task with great delight, complete enthusiasm and quite some trepidation. Stageplays, I think, offer a rich but treacherous source of material for motion pictures. The very fact that they are dramatic in form holds out a promise of easy adaptability to the dramatic requirements of the screen, yet often the best plays turn out to be most disappointing on film. This seems to be especially so when the effectiveness of the play has been to a great extent due to the successful use of the resources and techniques of its own medium. Certainly, in *Death of a Salesman* Miller has not only used the possibilities of the stage brilliantly, but expanded them with great imagination and bold innovation.

Other challenges of many kinds faced all of us involved in the making of the picture. *Salesman* had been that unusual thing: a serious play that was both a great critical success and a box office hit on Broadway. It received the Pulitzer Prize, the coveted New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and just about every other award that is available to a play in the United States. We all knew that the picture, and the work of each of us, would be measured against the unique success of the stage production.

As soon as Stanley Kramer announced that he had bought the play, a great wave of head-shaking began. Broadway was sure that "Hollywood" would "murder" it—while Hollywood pronounced its verdict upon it in the most fateful and crushing word it knows: "downbeat."

Kramer faced his share of the challenge in a most simple and straightforward way. He liked the play, he said, was greatly moved by it, and he thought it would make an even better picture. Thinking of the larger audience of movies, we agreed that we felt a great universality in the theme, for in the sense of Miller we are all "selling" something but most of all, like Willy Loman, selling ourselves, and we all want to be "well liked." There was never any question of altering the play's meaning or content, never any thought of watering it down or lessening its impact. If anything, the force of the film medium, we thought, might strengthen it. From a box office point of view, Kramer admitted, there was undoubtedly a risk involved. (The picture will be a challenge to audiences themselves, he said). Therefore, in order to give the picture a chance financially, it would have to be made on a very short schedule and without any waste. As far as its hopes for success were concerned, that would simply depend on how good a job all of us involved would do.

With the fundamental decision regarding the concept of the picture having been made so simply and courageously by Kramer, I found myself facing a challenge of my own from a directorial point of view. Different pictures require a different approach and take their values from different sources by different methods. In this instance our task was to transform a play into a picture and our duty to stay true to it. We wanted to retain the format of the play. Still, I wanted to make *Death of a Salesman* into truly a motion picture in its own right, not let it be stagey but make it, without permitting it to become arty, as cinematic as possible.

When faced with long dialogue scenes, I do not hold with the school that believes in moving around the actors incessantly and in panning or dollying around frantically for the sake of "giving it movement." Unless the movement of the actors and that of the camera is dictated by the inner dynamics of the scene, I find it distracting and irritating. The scenes of this play fall into two categories: reality and imagination. The realistic scenes I tried to handle as simply and naturally as possible, both in staging and in camera treatment. (In the scene, for instance, of Linda's great speech in the kitchen: "Attention must be paid . . .")—I deliberately strove for an almost static quality and for a complete simplicity of background, in order to avoid any distraction). In these scenes I depended primarily on the dialogue and the power of the performances.

It was the other aspect of the play that offered interesting cinematic possibilities, logically dictated by its very nature. Relating the last twenty-four hours of Willy Loman's life, the play blended and integrated the real happenings of this one day with his memories and fantasies, stretching back over many years and distant places. In presenting this story, the play borrowed freely from motion picture technique. The reason for this, I believe, is obvious. The very process of remembering, of the fantasy, of the daydream or even of imagination is essentially similar to the motion picture. They have in common the vivid movement, the quick transitions, the "dissolve," sometimes the vagueness of out-of-focus images, sometimes the precision of the close-up.

It was truly thrilling to see how naturally the play was finding its visual language in these sequences, while retaining Miller's dialogue almost entirely.

The screen demanded certain changes that were primarily due to its own characteristics, and as these changes began to emerge it seemed to me a most fortunate meeting of content and form. While the stage presentation had been highly stylized, with only a suggestion of sets, the realistically trained

eye of the camera demanded real sets, furnishings and props. This in turn raised the question of the settings for the fantasy sequences. How "real" were the backgrounds and surroundings in Willy's memories and fantasies? And now we realized that the demands of the camera coincided with the demands of psychology and of the drama itself. The very point Miller made was that for Willy the past merged with the present, fantasy was as real as reality and his mind slipped from one to the other without being aware of a dividing line.

This is a mental process in the film's own idiom—one the film can truthfully reproduce.

Take a scene like this:

Willy Loman is talking to his wife, Linda, in the kitchen of their Brooklyn home. Something Linda says, perhaps just the way she laughs, reminds him of another woman, of that woman's laughter in a Boston hotel room long ago. It rises and then fades, but as he continues to talk to Linda, it intrudes again, stronger now and closer.

He turns toward it, and the image of a woman, dimly lit, suddenly rises before his eyes. She is standing before a mirror; it seems she has just finished dressing. And now, as Willy is drawn to this image and slowly begins to move toward it, the camera moves with him, following closely. As Willy crosses the kitchen, the camera keeps him framed between his wife and the other woman. When he walks by his wife, still talking to her, the camera goes past her, too. His words, though spoken to Linda, are suddenly answered by the other woman.

Willy takes a few more steps, arrives at the woman and takes her in his arms. The lights have imperceptibly brightened, the room has become wholly that distant hotel room in Boston—in Willy's mind the memory has become reality.

And as the scene in the hotel room ends and the woman

leaves with her characteristic laugh, the sound blends again with Linda's laughter and Linda is just finishing the sentence she started speaking in the kitchen. Instead of the Boston hotel room, Willy finds himself in the hallway of his own house. All that happened in reality was that Willy, engulfed in a sudden memory, walked from the kitchen into the hallway and within the span of a few seconds relived an entire scene from the past.

This is an experience familiar to all of us. But beyond this, what we've attempted to say through the use of sets, camera and sound was that to Willy Loman the memory had become so real that he, for one brief moment, was physically in that distant hotel room and could actually feel that other woman's arms around him.

In devising these time-and-space transitions I was guided by one principle: they had to be conceived through Willy's mind and seen through his eyes. Here is what Miller has to say about Time in his play:

"There is nothing mysterious or difficult about it. Just as you may be sitting and talking to a friend, so does Willy. And then your friend says something that makes a strong connection in your mind with something that happened in your past. And although your friend goes on talking, unaware that your thoughts have moved to another time and place, you exist, you think, you feel and in your imagination you argue, love and fight, in the present and in the past at the same moment."

So it is in this play. There are no flashbacks here—we never go backward. It is simply that the past keeps flowing into the present, bringing its scenes and its characters with it—and sometimes we shall see both past and present simultaneously.

As well, there are times in this play when Willy talks to a person who is really before him, and at the same time with a person who is simply there in his imagination—but a person we, too, can see. What happens in such cases is simply that



Staging the "Requiem." Script clerk Donna Norridge, players Cameron Mitchell, Kevin McCarthy, Mildred Dunnock, Howard Smith, Don Keefer. In foreground, director Laslo Benedek. Photo: John Swope.



(1) Linda: "Willy darling, you're the handsomest man in the world . . ." (she laughs).  
 The sound of another woman's laughter blends in with Linda's. A look of fear crosses Willy's face.  
 (2) Willy (walking toward Linda): "You're the best there is, Linda. On the road . . . on the road . . ." As Willy walks, Linda is still on one side but on the other side we see a corner of a shabby hotel room. A woman is getting dressed. She is laughing.  
 (3) Willy (continues walking toward the other woman, talking to Linda): "There is so much I want to do for . . ." Other woman (answering him): "For me? You've done enough already, Willy . . ." (4) Willy has walked into the hotel room. Other woman: "I'm glad I picked you . . ." Willy (embracing her): "You picked me?"

the real person talking to him observes that the man is not quite coherent, for Willy, at times, is one of those thousands of men you may see any day in any city—respectably dressed, perfectly ordinary, and talking quietly to themselves as they walk along going about their business. In this play we shall see who it is that one of these men is talking to; we shall see that other life in which he simultaneously draws breath, suffers, laughs, triumphs, and fails."

It was for this same reason, namely that Willy Loman lived *simultaneously* in the past and in the present, that we decided that while the appearance of people and places in the memory sequences would change according to Willy's memory of them, Willy himself would not change. Fredric March played the entire role without any make-up or wardrobe changes, conveying changes in age solely through the power of his performance.

Having discarded the stylization of the stage production, the question of "how real" raised itself in regard to every aspect of the picture, from the style of acting to the nature of props. Playing the "memory" sequences in real surroundings, instead of just in a spot of light on a dark stage, how would the characters act, think and speak: as they really had done or as Willy remembered them? Seeing Willy having breakfast

from close, what would he eat: cereal or ham and eggs? I had only one answer to this all-prevailing problem of ham and eggs versus stylization: we would have to see exactly as much of life, and exactly in such a way as Willy saw in any particular state of mind.

When he is in normal contact with life, things would be shown and photographed "normal"—to the extent that his mind withdraws from reality and escapes into the past or flees into fantasy, to that extent and in that manner the camera would have to follow him on his tortured and tortuous way.

In the Brooklyn apartment building, pressing down on Willy's small house, I used only the set, as tall and close as possible, but no extras in the windows or passing by, for Willy wasn't concerned with people but with the stifling closeness of that huge wall. In the subway tunnel there were extras walking along with him as long as Willy would be aware of them—when he became submerged in the fantasy about his dead brother, he was alone with him in the endless tunnel.

One reviewer criticized the fact that Willy was acting in such a crazy way. The neighbors would have had him taken away to an asylum, he thought. This is perfectly true—viewed on that level. I never thought that this play could be approached in a *naturalistic* style. It is completely real and deeply true but by its whole nature—the terrific compression of its story, the rhetoric of its writing—it is only acceptable in a *theatrical* style.

While there are films that draw their strength from other sources, a theatrical picture like *Salesman* fails or succeeds with the performance of its cast. Perhaps it is not appropriate for a director to try to appraise the performances in his film, for the actor's work is so completely interwoven with his own, with his suggestions, reactions, interpretations. (While that is so on the stage also, on the screen the actor's creative performance is subject to and modified by the director's use of timing and emphasis). The fact is, I cannot write about this picture without recalling the pleasure of working with Fredric March, Mildred Dunnock and the whole cast, and without feeling deeply grateful to all of them.

I mentioned earlier the need for utmost economy in production. Our entire approach in this respect was unusual compared to established Hollywood procedures. In accordance with the method evolved by Kramer on his previous productions, the "team" entrusted with bringing *Salesman* to the screen, consisting mainly of Stanley Roberts, the screen writer; Rudolph Sternad, the production designer; Frank Planer, the cameraman, and myself, spent many weeks planning every detail. A great contribution was made by the production design of Rudolph Sternad.

I had always felt that one of the most important steps in the making of a picture was that certain indefinable process in which the director visualizes his scenes in terms of camera and movement, even before the first foot of film is shot. By necessity, as long as this process is confined to the imagination, it remains a vague one. Working closely with Sternad, these ideas received their first test of reality in his series of sketches, executed with great knowledge of sets, camera, lighting, and all the intricate problems of movie making, not to mention those of the shooting schedule. But beyond that, out of these remarkable sketches and, mostly, out of a detailed discussion of them, constantly new and more exciting ideas were born.

This period of designing, discussing and re-planning again was followed by two weeks of intensive rehearsals. By this  
*(Continued on page 96)*

## TWO STORY CONFERENCES

KING VIDOR, who has been a director in Hollywood for over 30 years (his "Hallelujah!" was voted one of the Ten Best Films by film directors in the Brussels Referendum), has recently written his autobiography. RICHARD BROOKS, writer/director of "Crisis" and "Deadline," has recently written a novel about Hollywood called "The Producer." In the one, some facts are fantastic enough to be fiction; in the other, most of the fiction looks like fact. Both also offer a fascinating account of that notorious ordeal, the Story Conference.

The extract from King Vidor's autobiography is reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Co. Inc. (New York), who will publish it in 1953 and from "The Producer" by permission of Simon and Schuster Inc. (New York) and William Heinemann (London) who are to publish the novel in Britain.

### KING VIDOR

"One day in 1930 Laurence Stallings and I were waiting to hear from Irving Thalberg, who was in charge of production at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. We had written a screen "treatment" of the life of Billy the Kid, and he had agreed to discuss it. We were working at my home, dressed in white flannel trousers, bright coloured sweaters and white rubber-soled shoes, when the message came that Thalberg would see us that afternoon. We rushed off to the studio at once without bothering to change.

In Thalberg's outer office there was a piece of furniture known as The Million Dollar Bench. If stars, directors and writers were often kept waiting there from a half hour to three hours, objections were seldom heard, for salaries were almost always large enough to compensate for the annoyance. Though we had brought along a box of candy for the receptionist, we hardly expected the immediate response which issued from the intercom box on her desk:

"Mr. Thalberg would like Mr. Vidor and Mr. Stallings to meet him at once in the car in the driveway."

We rushed to obey. The motor of a seven-passenger limousine was already throbbing. Inside sat Thalberg and Louis Mannix, the MGM treasurer, deep in conversation regarding expenditures on future productions. Stallings and I slid into the folding seats in front of them and the car moved off. Passing out of the studio gate we headed in the general direction of Los Angeles. The chauffeur picked up speed at once.

Working with genius-type studio executives prepares one for the unexpected, and Stallings and I gave no thought to the destination or purpose of our auto ride. When Thalberg and Mannix stopped in their discussion of expenses, I thought I would make it easier for them to acknowledge our presence by turning around as best I could in my folding seat. Stallings had inherited a wooden leg from the First World War (a name which he invented, many years before there was a Second) and for him the turning-around manoeuvre was impossible.

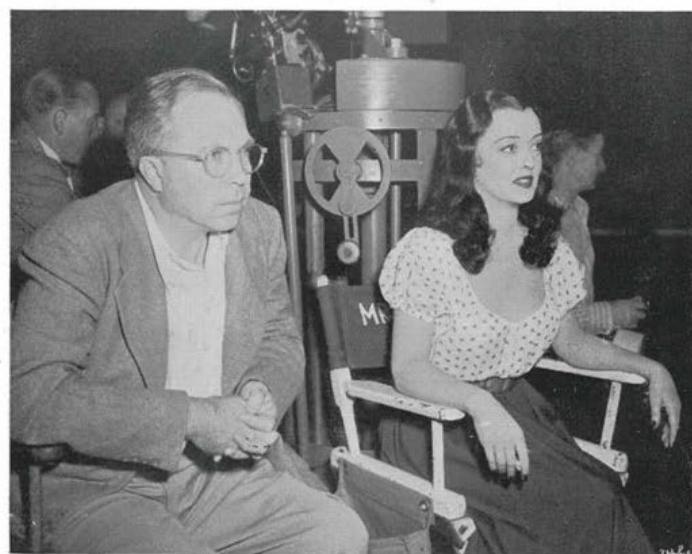
"Well, let's hear what you have done," said Thalberg. And the story conference began.

I started by saying that Billy the Kid shot his first victim because of an insult to his mother. I emphasized this bit of historical half-truth in the hope of convincing Thalberg that all of the Kid's murders were understandable, if not entirely excusable. Then I took Billy through scenes of murder in self-defence, and murders on the side of justice if not on the side of law.

The chauffeur seemed to be in a terrific hurry, and when he applied the brakes at the sudden change to red of a traffic signal, I fell to the floor, but Mannix pulled me up and I went on with my tale. Stallings, who survived the slaughter of Belleau Woods, was too frightened at the speed of the car to take an active part in the conference.

During my recital Thalberg had maintained what I hoped was a respectful silence.

Suddenly the car made a turn to the right and came to an abrupt halt. Quite a crowd was gathered on the sidewalk



King Vidor, with Bette Davis, on the set of "Beyond the Forest."

and quite a few expensive limousines, similar to ours, were parked ahead of us. The doorman who stepped up to our car wore white gloves and a dark suit. I realized that we had stopped at the main entrance of a funeral parlor. Apparently we were late for a funeral! Whose?

I was obliged to step out to enable Thalberg and Mannix to get out.

As I started to re-enter the car and sit out the funeral service with Stallings, a strong hand gripped my arm.

"Aren't you coming inside?" It was Marshall Neilan, the director.

"Marshall," I said, "look how we're dressed."

"That's not important. They'll be expecting you."

Who'll be expecting us, I wondered.

Stallings, with the inquisitive soul of a journalist, had started to work his way out of the car.

We must have made a pretty picture, two men in white flannels and bright sweaters, as we entered the crowded chapel.

"Who's dead?" I asked Stallings, in a whisper.

"Let's find out," he replied.

Inside we were met by Lew Cody. This famous actor was a convivial man-about-town, and I had never seen him in any mood except a light-hearted one. He was not smiling now. Lew showed no surprise at our inappropriate attire and soberly showed us to two seats next to Thalberg and Mannix. A flower-draped casket reposed impressively before us. An organ played gently in the proper mood.

I didn't dare speak. Finally I pantomimed to Mannix to give me pencil and paper. On the back of an envelope I wrote: "Who is it?"

Mannix took the pencil and answered "Mabel Normand. Don't you read the papers?"

I was shocked. I hadn't read a newspaper in several days.

Beautiful, lithe Mabel Normand! When I had been a young ticket-taker in a Texas nickelodeon, Mabel Normand had been my dreamgirl. I remembered her, black tights covering her entire body, as she walked to the end of the board and dived gracefully to the water below. I had known her as The Biograph Girl and as the star of dozens of Mack Sennett comedies. Marshall Neilan had directed her first full-length film, *Mickey*. Lew Cody had been married to her.

Thalberg leaned toward me across Mannix.

"Too many murders," he whispered.

Had she been murdered? I was stunned.

"The public won't accept it," he added, and I remembered Billy the Kid.

I nodded quick but temporary agreement, for I was now following another line of thought. I had begun to recognize faces. There was Marie Dressler of the large, expressive visage. She was never one for subtlety in comedy, nor was she subtle in grief. Ben Turpin was weeping unashamedly. The big face of gigantic Mack Swain of *Gold Rush* fame was marked with tears. Charlie Chaplin, Mack Sennett, Chester Conklin, Hank Mann, Buster Keaton, Harry Langdon—they were all her fellow workers, and they were all crying. I was fascinated by their faces—familiar and sometimes ridiculous faces that made people roar with laughter the world over. It was amazing to see their countenances marked with the embarrassing distortion of deep sorrow.

In due course good words were spoken about Mabel by the minister and the service was over. We watched as the casket moved down the aisle towards the chapel entrance and the brutality of the sunlight beyond.

Presently the four of us were back in the limousine, whose windshield now bore a sticker with the word "Funeral."

As the procession moved slowly along Figueroa street, Thalberg instructed our driver to turn out at the next intersection. With this quick manoeuvre we left the line of dark cars and headed back to Culver City and the studio. When the driver stooped briefly to tear the tell-tale sticker from the windshield, Thalberg resumed our discussion of Billy the Kid.

"Was Sheriff Garrett his friend during the time of the last five murders?" he asked.

I couldn't answer. I was still thinking of the girl in the black tights on the end of the diving board.

Stallings took over. The public was tired of love stories, he pointed out, and was ready for honest brutality. The movies, he said, were on the brink of a new era of violence. He was right. It wasn't long before James Cagney rubbed half a grapefruit in his girlfriend's face.

At the end of Stallings' talk, the car passed again through the studio gates.

We stepped out on the narrow walk and Thalberg bounded up the steel steps to his office. At the top he turned. "I'll call you," he said.

## RICHARD BROOKS

(Cast—Matt, the Producer: Dave Boles, his assistant: Herman Volke, the Director: J. Wilson White, the Scenarist: Alma, the Secretary).

The Story Conference had been in session for twenty minutes. It had begun with greetings of endearment and hurricane enthusiasm. They had called each other "baby," "honey," "darling," "sweetie," "lover." These strong terms of affection usually meant the relationships were tenuous or newly formed. "Honey," "sweetie," "darling" could mean you were about to disagree with him but wanted him to know you appreciated him just the same; or it could mean even though you didn't have time for him, you liked him anyway; or it could mean you were about to take him into a confidence beyond the expectation of a new acquaintanceship; but it rarely meant friendship, respect or love.

Herman Volke sat in a deep chair, glued his fingertips together in a pious attitude, and proclaimed that "The Great Man" had a great chance of winning the Academy Award.

J. Wilson White, the scenarist, kept an enthusiastic smile on his lips and said that personally he thought "The Great Man" was going to be a director's picture and that, at the very least, Herman would win the Award for direction.

Dave Boles said nothing with an eloquently enthusiastic expression.

The more they talked about awards, the quieter and more depressed Matt became. Matt was wary of Herman Volke's reputation. Volke had made several good pictures years ago. He was still riding on their momentum. People (consisting of Volke and his press agent) said the recent bad movies were the result of stupid stories, incompetent actors, ridiculous producers, hard luck, ignorant critics and preposterous audiences.

But the Studio (production), the Bank (money) and New York (power) wanted Volke because he had made high-budget pictures before, and, therefore, it followed he could do it again. The stars wanted Volke because he coddled them and wowed them and shot more close-ups than most other directors.

Matt was willing to believe that if Volke directed the movie, it would be easier all around, though he would have preferred Henry King or Zinnemann or Robson or Goulding or Vidor or LeRoy or Curtiz.

J. Wilson White had been hired to write the screenplay because he had along list of favourable credits, most of them earned a long time ago, and all of them split credits (Writer X and J. Wilson White, or, Writer Y—Writer Z—and J. Wilson White). Dorothy Parker, upon being introduced to White for the first time, had said, "Oh, I always thought your name was And J. Wilson White."

White was about forty-five, silver hair, witty, good manners, good golfer, good poker player, good drinker, good politics, good fellow all around, good hack. He had written one acceptable play for Broadway and had come to Hollywood to stay. Careful investments in real estate and a drive-in restaurant had made him a wealthy man. He had been writing the same plot with different character names for years. As long as the pictures made money he was in demand. Now that the war was over and audiences were shopping, the demand for the same story did not exist. But if you wanted to play safe, you hired one of the half-dozen J. Wilson Whites.

"Let's kick the story around a little, yes?" said Volke, rubbing his fingertips together. "First I would like to say that I think we got a terrific setup. We're all agreed on this, hm?"

J. Wilson White nodded and looked at the ceiling.

Dave Boles looked at Matt, and, when Matt did not agree, said nothing, but frowned.

"Of course," said Volke, "it needs work. Now, just thinking out loud, so don't hold me to it, darling, but it seems to me like we got a real story with morals. Something to send the audiences out with an uplift."

"I think you're right. Like in *Casablanca*," White said, referring to a film he had not written, "where you left the theatre feeling great, and mind you the boy and girl didn't even get together at the end."

"But with hope," crackled Volke. "Yes, hope. Not a sonofabitch thought they would stay separated. Somewhere, someplace, those two would get together. That's what I mean. An uplift. Now this story is the story of a no-good heel. I got a terrific opening shot for the picture. I was going to speak to you about this, J." Volke smiled at White. He got out of his chair and paced for a moment to make sure of his audience. Then he framed his hands to simulate the frame in a Viewfinder.

"A head, a terrific close-up of a head. He is smiling, hm? An angel. Over this we hear her voice: 'I love you, darling.' That's not the dialogue, J., just, you know."

White nodded tolerantly. "I think that's a swell opening line for a picture, Herman. 'I love you, darling.' After all, that's the theme of the picture. Well, not exactly of the pic-

ture, but of this man's life. Women are always falling in love with him."

"We pull back sharply," said Volke, retrieving the stage, "and we are in a train. Process. Outside we can see meadows and bullshit like that. The great man is sitting and smiling at the girl . . ."

"Pauline," assisted White.

"She says it again. 'I love you, darling.' He bends down to kiss her. She holds him tight. She really loves him, hm? And what is he doing? He's looking at his wrist watch behind her back to see what time it is. He doesn't give a goddam for her. Right away we get his whole character in one shot."

"Herman," said White softly, "I think that does it. Just what we needed to send us off to a quick start."

"Matt?" said Volke, sinking into his chair again.

"All right. Go ahead." This sort of thing always befuddled Matt. They started talking about opening shots and pulling back and close-ups and the story got lost.

"You don't see it?" asked Volke, injured.

"I see it," said Matt. "Go ahead."

"You take it awhile, J.," said Volke, leaning his head back on the chair and assuming a scholarly position.

White said, "We've all read the thing, haven't we?" He looked at Matt. "If there's something you don't like, Matt, we'll change it, but why do we have to tell the story to ourselves? We know it."

"If there's something I don't like you'll change it?" asked Matt slowly. "Without even knowing what I don't like?"

"What the hell; it's your picture."

"It's your picture, too, isn't it?" said Matt angrily, rising, coming around the desk. Maybe he couldn't find what was wrong with the story, but he was certain what was wrong with the man who had written it. "Your name's going on the story. Doesn't that mean anything?"

"Of course it does."

"But anything I want changed, you'll change it! Just like that. The story should go this way, but I say it should go that way, and you'll write it that way."

"All right, Matt," said White coldly, "you don't have to become abusive. I'm only trying to help you lick it."

"Maybe that's the trouble," said Matt. "Maybe we've licked it into submission. It's down like a dog, on its back, with its paws up, whining for us not to hit it again."

Volke closed his eyes. He was no longer a part of this squabble. He was the director.

"Sure, we've all read the script," went on Matt. "We've read it and read it and read it, and we still don't know what it's all about."

"The protagonist," began White.

"I don't know what the hell a protagonist is," cut in Matt. "Give it to me simple."

"You bought a story about a heel," began White again.

"I know what I bought," interrupted Matt. "That's not what we've got.."

"If you feel this way, Matt, though God knows why, maybe you'd better get yourself another boy." White rose.

"We'll see about that, too. But first I laid a lot of cash on the line. I want something for my dough. For Crissake, don't you know what it's about?"

White maintained his injured air in silence.

"Herman?" said Matt.

"I got some doubts myself, darling. This is one of the things that's bothered me."

"Dave?"

Dave Boles cleared his throat. "This script," said Dave, keeping his eyes on the pencil, "is about a no-good heel, who comes home to his family and messes up their lives. He meets a nice girl and he almost messes up her life. Then, in the end, she saves him from himself, and she's rich, or her father's got a lot of money, and the father says as long as the great man loves his daughter, and so forth and so forth, and they get married."

There was a long silence.

Herman Volke already was thinking that perhaps Matt would shelve the picture and what other pictures at other studios were in preparation he might do. Things had been so much simpler when he had never bothered with the scripting of the story, but only with the shooting of it. When he had first come to Hollywood, he had scarcely been able to read English. Someone had explained the scenes to him and he had shot them. And his work had been excellent, remembered even now. As he had learned to read, and had become involved in the construction of stories, his pictures had become successively worse.

"All right," said Matt quietly. "What Dave said, that's the plot, and it stinks. But, while he was talking, I realized why I don't like it. It's crooked. Dishonest."

"For Heaven's sake, Matt," complained White. "There're at least ten successful pictures with the same idea."

"That only makes it old. That doesn't make it good. Nobody will believe this character in our story. I admit you don't have to admire him, but you've got to understand him. He's got to be real."

"Well, if you think you can write it better," said White, rising again.

"Sit down, please," said Matt. "I can't write it. But I



Story conferences can be happy. Spencer Tracy, Ruth Gordon, Garson Kanin, and Katharine Hepburn at a lunchtime one during "Pat and Mike."

know good writing when I see it. The story we bought, that's good writing. It's been good for over twenty years, when it was first published. Ever since I've been in pictures I've wanted to do it. The Great Man, the one I bought, is about a hero, not a heel. As far as everybody's concerned this man is wonderful. He's got charm, looks, grace; he's got a way with him. He can play tennis better than most people. He's better at golf and he always wins at cards and he's got guts. He does things, crazy things maybe, but they usually come out right—or at least people think they come out right. But actually he's a cheat. He always cheats a little. No matter what he does. He cheats on his golf score. He cheats a little at cards. He'll bump his best friend's wife. And the funny thing is she'll protect him. And when the friend finds out about it, who does he blame? His wife. And as the story comes to a close, there's a chance the Great Man may get away with it all, when a situation comes up. If he doesn't face the music, somebody he really loves will die. In the story, the one I bought, he tried to face the crisis honestly. He'll let himself be exposed. But when the chips are down, he can't. He acts according to his pattern. He cheats again."

"Who wants to see a picture like that?" asked White. "This is supposed to be entertainment."

"I want to tell the tragedy of a man who feels he has to live up to his advance notices. To do it he has to break most of the rules. But the hero-worshippers are as bad as he is. In the end this destroys him. And the hero-worshippers go looking for another hero to worship. I want it to be real. Honest. If it's that, it'll be entertaining, too."

Silence.

"Well?" said Matt.

"It's only a picture, Matt," said White.

"What do you mean?"

"This script's got laughs, excitement and the kind of story people want."

"How do you know what they want?"

"I've proved it."

"Ever thought," said Matt, "about the kind of story you want to do?"

"Pictures are not plays."

"But pictures aren't less important. Listen, you: to me pictures are important. I like pictures. A lot of my friends don't. But I do. And I want mine to be good. The best."

Volke got up. "I got to go. Where is it, Matt?"

"Through that door," said Dave.

"Well?" said Matt, when Volke had left.

"Rewrite?" said White.

"Yes."

"Anything you say," said White.

"Not what I say" groaned Matt, "what the story has to say."

"I see your point."

"What's my point?"

"What you said."

"What's that?"

"It's really not much of a job," said White. "If we make the girl poor instead of rich . . ."

"J.," said Matt. "Hold it, J." Matt went to the bar. "Drink?"

"Thanks," nodded White.

Matt poured a straight one for himself and a bourbon and water for White.

"Help me out, J."

"Anything you say, Matt."

"Say it."

"Say it?"

"You want me to put somebody else on it, don't you?"

J. Wilson White sipped his drink. "Anything you say."

"It's not your fault. It's mine."

"Maybe if we . . ."

"I'll get somebody else to do a little polish job," Matt cut in. "You understand."

"Sure!"

"No hard feelings."

The phone rang. Matt picked up the receiver. It was Alma. She said Herman Volke wanted to talk to Matt in her office. Matt hung up and told White to freshen up his drink, that he'd be right back.

Volke and Matt went to a corner of Alma's office.

"I couldn't talk in front of him," said Volke. "You're screwed, darling. It ain't hopeless, but you're had. For weeks I knew, but how could I tell you? I like you too much."

"Sure. And I love you, too."

"I just talked with my agent."

"I've let him go," said Matt, his throat dry. He knew Volke was easing himself out. "There'll be somebody else on it tonight."

"But we've got a starting date in my contract."

"If it runs over, you'll be paid."

"I'm not talking money, darling."

"I am. We'll start on time. The script'll be right. And Taggart will play it."

"You think so?"

"Yeh. I think so."

Volke shook hands with Matt. "I love it the way you told it, darling. It lays itself out. Clean. It's shootable."

"Yeh," said Matt, already running through a list of writers who might be available.

"I'm not going back in," said Volke. "I couldn't face that louse. What he did to you, I could kill him. Twenty years I been in this business. Never did I work with anybody who is such a sweetheart like you. I lay down my life for you, you know that, hm?"

"Sure," said Matt. "Sure."

## The Seventh Art

BLOOMINGTON, Indiana.—Police in a patrol car found three-year-old Richie Davis riding his tricycle at dawn, two miles away from his home. He said he sneaked out to look at the posters and "see what was on at the movie."—*Evening Standard*.

\*

The camera is the primary difference between the films and any other form of dramatic expression, according to Fritz Lang.

—R.K.O.-Radio Press handout.

\*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—fond as he was of beautiful women—did not have the good fortune to get to know Susan Hayward, the 20th Century-Fox star in the Technicolor film *David and Bathsheba*. Indeed, he lived his life 200 years too early . . . Yet people, and particularly women, must at his time have been much the same as they are today. How else would the famous line, *Zwei Seelen in einer Brust*, "Two souls, alas, live in my breast," have come to him?—20th Century-Fox publicity write-up sent to German newspaper.

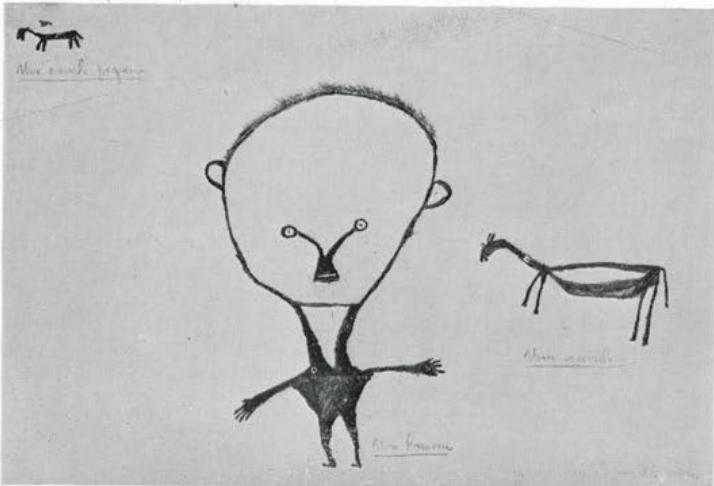
Film and radio star Harold Warrender, vice-president of Actors' Equity, said Britain can make the best films in the world. "We have our equal to Tarzan," he said. "We have equals to the beauties in Hollywood."—Report of Trades Union Congress in "News Chronicle."

\*

By being director as well as actor I am thoroughly familiar with every phase of the creation of a motion picture.—Paul Henreid.

\*

MILLIONAIRE'S SON, Stanford Man, Single, 30, DESIRES POSITION in the glamorous, excitingly interesting movie industry as a secretary, publicist, and golf or tennis companion to a reasonably prominent person in this business. Have good social connections nationally thru four millionaire relatives, an Ambassador and a railroad president. Income from family oil co. and hotels enables me to accept low monthly salary of \$150. Will pay own expenses on week-ends in Palm Springs and Las Vegas.—Advertisement in "Daily Variety."



## Images de la Folie

Enrico Fulchignoni is an Italian producer at present working for U.N.E.S.C.O. With a degree in medicine, a professorship of psychology at Rome University, he made shorts with Emmer and Carlo Castelli. He has also been attached to the Centro Sperimentale in Rome, and produced opera. With this varied background, Fulchignoni, who is a Sicilian, brings an energetic clarity to his films and combines a scientific approach with a certain religious sense that has nothing of the dreariness of our damper climates about it.

*Images de la Folie* (16 mm. Kodachrome) succeeds an excellent documentary, *Mosaics of Ravenna*, and an interesting essay on *The Demonic in Art*. But his latest film is probably the first of its kind; it is based on an exhibition of paintings by mental patients from twenty countries, held in conjunction with the First World Psychiatric Congress in Paris. Each was accompanied by case notes on a patient's general background and the causes of his disturbance. From a selection of these pictures, Fulchignoni has dealt with several related phases of mental derangement. First of all we penetrate into the "earthly paradise" of hopes and dreams, which is also common to the normal man and woman. Then in a series of more realistic paintings concerned with town and city life there is a suggestion of greater hallucination.

The treatment of love falls into two groups, homosexuals who take part in a boxing match, and a Swiss painter's strange renderings of a ball where everyone wears some form of glasses or has joined eyes, representing the schizophrenic's separation from the world of reality. The region of nightmare and melancholia, watched by the great eyes of a cat, the pre-occupations with violence and pain, culminate in a work where a painter takes upon himself all the sufferings of others in a strange representation of his own crucifixion.

Unfortunately I saw a silent version of the film, but I believe the commentary, suggesting the disjointed ramblings of a patient, must add much to its already considerable value and interest. Although the colours may be bright and Fulchignoni has used them to dramatic advantage, to me the whole is not only a record of the madman's world but of the influences which sent him there.

Fulchignoni is about to make a film on Blake, and it will be interesting to see how the Italian mind approaches that visionary who himself drew so much from Dante.

PATRICIA HUTCHINS



## **They Made Me a Myth (3)**

### **MR. GOLDWYN'S HAPPY FAMILY**

**The Best Years of Our Lives — Our Very Own — I Want You**

#### **Family Trees**

##### *The Best Years of Our Lives.*

Milly Stephenson (*Mother*) : Myrna Loy.  
 Al Stephenson (*Father*) : Fredric March.  
 Peggy Stephenson (*Daughter*) : Teresa Wright.  
 Fred Derry (*who marries Peggy*) : Dana Andrews.  
 Fred Derry's Mother (*wrong side of tracks*) : Gladys George.

##### *Our Very Own.*

Louis Macaulay (*Mother*) : Jane Wyatt.  
 Fred Macaulay (*Father*) : Donald Cook.  
 Gail (*adopted daughter*) : Ann Blyth.  
 Mrs. Lynch (*Gail's real mother, wrong side of tracks*) : Ann Dvorak.  
 Chuck (*Gail's boyfriend*) : Farley Granger.

##### *I Want You.*

Sarah Greer (*Mother*) : Mildred Dunnock.  
 Thomas Greer (*Father*) : Robert Keith.  
 Martin (*Son*) : Dana Andrews.  
 Nancy (*Martin's wife*) : Dorothy McGuire.  
 Jack (*Second Son*) : Farley Granger.  
 Carrie (*Jack's girlfriend*) : Peggy Dow.

#### **Extracts from a letter from Mrs. Sarah Greer to Mrs. Milly Stephenson—**

“... So wonderful to hear from you and such a nice newsy letter too. I'm scribbling this on the porch waiting for my apple pie to cool. It's so heartening to know you and Al are still having the best years of your lives in spite of those Terrible People, and so thrilling that Fred will be joining Martin soon in Washington.

I guess Peggy will feel lonesome when he goes, though, in spite of the lovely twins. Since Uncle Sam said I Want You to Martin and Jack life has been a little grey here, though they write me such wonderful letters every day ...”

(Quotations from letters follow, of no interest).

“Nancy and Carrie, of course, are a great comfort. None of us complain, we know what's expected of us, we just wait for better days and go on as usual. Sometimes we spend wonderful evenings, just sitting looking at each other, waiting. You heard about Carrie? She's hoping for a boy, but of course Jack wants a girl. He says he'll call it Sarah—after me!—then Milly, after you, then Louis, so she'd bear the name of every Mother in our family!

That reminds me I'm glad Louis came to stay with you, and that she feels Gail's really her very own again. Wasn't it terrible, the sort of experience no young American girl should have to go through today? Think of it, Milly, that poor girl was without a real mother for a whole week, and Louis was without a daughter too. I think it nothing short of heroic. And I was so shocked to hear Mrs. Lynch's hair was dyed blonde; at least Fred's poor

Another mealtime problem: mother and son in “I Want You”.



*Crisis at lunch: the Macaulays of “Our Very Own”. Foster daughter (Ann Blyth, left) disturbed by discovery of her adoption, anxiously watched by foster-parents (Donald Cook, Jane Wyatt).*



*Centre left and right: the wrong side of the tracks. Gail Macaulay (Ann Blyth, left) visits her real mother (Ann Dvorak, centre) in “Our Very Own”. Right: Fred Derry (Dana Andrews, centre) visits his parents (Roman Bohnen and Gladys George) in “The Best Years of our Lives”.*





Crisis at supper: the Greers of "I Want You". Son (Farley Granger, left), on eve of Korea call-up, anxiously watched by Mother (Mildred Dunnock), sister-in-law (Dorothy McGuire), brother (Dana Andrews) and Father (Tom Keith).



Below left and right: women on top of men. Peggy and Fred Derry (Teresa Wright, Dana Andrews) and the Stephensons (Myrna Loy, Fredric March) at home in "The Best Years of our Lives".



mother—you'll pardon my mentioning her, I'm sure, since you haven't seen her for years—was a natural. But I guess if you find yourself that side of the tracks anything can happen. I just thank God my family was spared such a humiliating experience. But it's fine, just fine, that Gail never looked back after Graduation Day, and her wedding to Chuck was beautiful. I cried. I guess Louis did too. You know, it was so funny, Louis gave them a Cadillac and an icebox and an absolutely complete kitchen outfit, and I couldn't think what was left for me to give, till I remembered Television. And they were so thrilled! Gail sent me a card from Florida, and said that the Cadillac had a wonderful radio and there was heaps of swimming and icecream and they were having a dreamy honeymoon. It gave me a kind of glow.

Martin's work in Washington seems very important, though of course it's Secret and you have to be very careful these days. Guess he'll be promoted soon. Nancy wants a new Cadillac.

Jack seems to be settling down after he was so difficult about the War at first. You remember I wrote you about that terrible scene we had at the dinner table? (Isn't it funny, Milly, how all our big family scenes seem to happen at mealtimes? It makes me realise how close our lovely families are, that everything about us is really exactly the same, especially We Mothers). Anyhow, Jack guesses he'll be promoted soon. Carrie wants a television set.

Wonderful to hear about Fred. So strange to think he got that building job by the most unlikely coincidence and that now he's a partner in the firm. It makes you feel kind of warm and comfortable. It gave me another glow. Peggy always wanted a bigger house.

And your own Al, Milly! I always knew of course he'd get his promotion at the bank; I guess he's a big man in Boone City now! So wonderful to have a bank manager for a husband! The new central heating sounds wonderful!

We must get together some time, Milly—Greenhill isn't so very far from Boone City, so why don't you and Al and Peggy and Fred and the twins come over? In your Cadillacs it wouldn't take long. I could ask Louis too. We Mothers ought to get together more often, especially now. Wouldn't it be fun to spend an evening just looking at photographs of our wonderful boys? I guess we might cry a little, but it would be fun.

I must stop this letter now, and see whether my apple pie's cooled . . .

(A new recipe for apple pie follows).

"I've got some odds and ends of shopping to finish up too. I've suddenly realised I forgot to get some steaks and some eggs and vegetables and some ice cream and some fruit juice and some nuts and a box of that chocolate candy Carrie just adores and some fresh cream and some honey and maybe a whole new ham because they're so fresh and juicy just now and Carrie likes them for breakfast (with her eggs, of course).

Thomas is all right. Business not as good as last year at the Construction Co., and I guess he should retire soon. But he says he can't face it. Well, I don't know I want him around the house all day anyhow!

Deepest love to you all,  
Sarah.

P.S.—Did you see a movie called *My Foolish Heart*? Most beautiful thing I've seen in years."

Pre-mealtime problem: mother and daughter in "The Best Years of our Lives".



## BOOK REVIEWS

**DOCUMENTARY FILM** by Paul Rotha, in collaboration with Richard Griffith and Sinclair Road. Preface by John Grierson. Illustrated. (Faber & Faber, 42s.).

*Reviewed by John Grierson*

Paul Rotha's new edition of *Documentary Film* gives us an even more highly developed work of reference than before. It is more patently than ever a monument to those very special qualities in Rotha: his patience, his persistence, his affectionate regard for detail, his colossal capacity for work. It is getting to be quite an *oeuvre*.

On the original work—purely Rotha—is now grafted research contributions from, among others, Sinclair Road, The Editor of *The Factual Film*, and Richard Griffith, long ago an established expert on documentary films and now Head of the Film Section of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The result is not only to make the work more comprehensive but also to do—or begin to do—the justice long due to other schools of documentaries than the British. This is not to say that Rotha has previously been unfair. Like all of us, he has tended to see documentary the British way. It has been very good for us, for we have benefited from the illusion that we were the works, organised, strong and sure of ourselves, and others merely *flaneurs* of the boulevards in comparison. Whether it's age that has come upon us or that the inner political decline of British documentary has brought us to other senses, certainly it was high time that we did better for the American, French, Belgian, Danish, Dutch and other schools across the world. It means, of course, new evaluations of documentary itself, in other origins, other contexts. That Rotha has made a beginning in this highly complex and difficult task is excellent news for all.

It means problems, of course. First as to method. The old original work, as I say, was at the same time good old Rotha. If you disagreed with him, even if you thought his facts were a bit cockeyed, dammit, that was him, with every right to put it the way he saw it. You just thanked him for a job that was of the greatest help to the cause. But the new attitude gives him new responsibility, like occupying a Chair. If it is to be the master work on the subject, as now seems inevitable, we must in our different ways help him to make it so.

The American section for example, I find quite excellent, and all credit to the Griffith-Rotha understanding which makes it so. Here is evaluation not only conscious of the arts—perhaps a little too much so relatively—but also conscious of the political background which made the banning of *The Land* by the State Department not only a personal tragedy for Robert Flaherty but a disgust to all liberals. Some of us would have liked to have seen the political line of the story in even blacker ink, for we have not come to the ungracious end of it by a long way.

By the same token, the Canadian section is quite astonishingly good coming from an American observer under English editorship. Perhaps here I may be permitted a first corrective comment. There is in the book generally a romantic tendency to play up the personal influence and power of individuals, not least myself. I would be less than appreciative if I did not value a big hello for the establishment of the National Film Board of Canada, but the objective analysis which we must finally arrive at if this book is to point the moral of imaginative sponsorship, involves a closer account still of certain less personal and more political influences. Canada, riding on a wave of national feeling, was starving for a public art that emphasised it. Its distant communities needed, absolutely needed, a communicative link with the Capital and with the world in which the new nation must live. The North Pole had become the real point of focus of the national destiny and Canada's imagination had to be given nothing less than a right-about-turn.

Who spotted all this? I did certainly. So did Stuart Legg with that first rate scholarly mind of his. But, not unimportantly, so did the Prime Minister Mackenzie King. The old boy was as good a geo-politician as either of us and could do a damn sight more about it. That was the secret of the trick. When King was gone, we were gone. I am sorry to say it, but the big idea, which for documentary looks just a film idea, passed with the passing of that astonishing little giant. The Ministers around his coat tails were, for our special purposes, in another class of sponsorship altogether. What stuck? As usual, what was politically safe, and exactly as it happened with the Labour Government in England. I am glad

at the same time to record that shame played its part. They didn't bump off Norman McLaren and the crazy side of the N.F.B. All honour to somebody and especially I think to Irwin, who was brought in to clear up this nest of "dangerous" people. I ask, here in Edinburgh, how did he get away with *Neighbours*?

Now I must not be tempted into thinking that my personal knowledge of this scene or of any other is the right knowledge for a work of this kind. What I think is necessary, now that Rotha's book has gone the way it has, is that we should all quite boldly give evidence and that Rotha and his co-workers make what objectively they will of it. In fact, since people—and especially, I mean, far away people all over the world—are depending on this statement of experience, we owe to them the sharpest and most politically understandable estimate we can give. We are getting closer and closer to it, and closer still it must yet be.

Rotha's research contribution on the European countries is somewhat disappointing to me. If I didn't know the time lag on the book, I could ask what the devil had happened to the man who did that superb Civil Service job on *The Factual Film*. Where is Franju on the record—the Franju of *En Passant Par La Lorraine* and *Sang des Bêtes*, which was certainly a startler to me? Claudel of *Quai d'Orsay* is noted for his intelligent direction of public moneys in the making of short films, but I am not sure that he isn't now one of the four really wonderful official sponsors serving the genre.

In another key, Haanstra of the *Mirror of Holland* is "in particular promising," which he certainly is, but wasn't it Haanstra who was denounced by the great Pudovkin as "decadent"? I should have liked to have seen Rotha pour that one down Pudovkin's neck, for I thought it was a silly thing for the director of *A Simple Case* to say at all. In another key still, I would have liked to have seen some effective reference to the newsreel position in Belgium and Holland which, as in New Zealand and Australia—and for the same national reasons—carries the real flag of documentary. I would have liked to have seen special reference to the work they did on the Riots over Leopold. That wasn't ordinary. As with Claudel, I would have liked to have seen closer appreciation of Dr. Vroom's imaginative approach to cultural sponsorship.

But I'm taking it you now gather what I am after in this review. All of us have had particular experiences in one field or another. I beg you all to do what now I begin to do: give Rotha new information or new observations for his consideration. I just don't accept any more the estimate of the documentary story as Rotha and I, in particular, have elected to present it. I don't accept it because in the high flush of successful sponsorship by the British Government, we didn't closely enough examine the more various roots from which good films could come. In fact now that the cold wind of a certain adversity—and I wouldn't bother about it if it weren't an aesthetic adversity—has blown up the pants of British documentary, these more various roots are necessary for our study. The position is somewhat reversed, and it is we who need to know the tricks of sponsorship the others have found out by themselves. Not least, following Stuart Legg's excellent analysis in *SIGHT AND SOUND* of our British need of a new and wider survey of the political horizon, we have something to learn in the geo-political necks of the wood and among *troisième forces* and such.

Parenthetically, two more questions I meant to put in before. Is Anstey's Transport taking it away over the hills as we expected? It has a special importance as occupying, and quite largely, one of the pushover sponsorship areas. And second. Do we really give a proper estimate to the work of Cavalcanti and draw the right conclusion about the need for idea men of his commanding quality? Jottings among others on the margin.

One other jotting. Against my own preface I have simply put my toughest of all hieroglyphs. It goes so, Ø, meaning a raising of the eyebrows and a certain wonder that somebody couldn't do better. But what's the use of apologizing for the gloom of 1950-51. I for one knew that Crown had had it, and that the first warm great wave of social democratic force amongst us was washing away among the rocks. My contribution is an awful example of trying but failing to put a hard objective front on a passing phase. I have a silly habit of trying occasionally to write the way Lenin did. It is clear that I only finish up by being unreadable.

But I mustn't get off the track. Rotha's book is a wonderful job with years of work behind it. It was a personal work once: it has now acquired the greater responsibility of being a standard one. Richer it still yet must be if we are not only to understand the now various arts of documentary, but the equally various ways of making them possible. That job mustn't be left to Rotha alone. Correspondents everywhere should take it on themselves to make their own jottings and contributions, and to make them as helpful to Rotha as possible.

P.S.—Paul describes me in his own Preface as now a kind of a Zanuck making second features. Correction. I am making first features. One of them recently was a documentary called *The Brave Don't Cry*. It shows you. I wasn't so far away after all.

### MR. RANK, A Study of J. Arthur Rank and British Films, by Alan Wood. (Hodder and Stoughton, 20s.).

*Reviewed by Duncan Crow*

"What so tedious as a twice-told tale," asked Pope; and Shakespeare agreed with him. But Shakespeare and Pope were not always right, as this new book of Mr. Wood's plainly demonstrates. There is no doubt that the story of J. Arthur Rank has been a happy hunting-ground of writers for nearly ten years now, and the world at large is long since familiar with the more colourful contrasts of his character: his Methodism and his millions, his flour-milling and his film-making. The tale is therefore, in a sense, "twice-told"—though even then it is only fair to add that I have not previously come upon so comprehensive and analytical an account of Mr. Rank the individual as is to be found in this book. No one, however, can complain that it is "tedious." On the contrary, it is a fascinating story told in a forthright and interesting manner.

Joseph Arthur Rank was born in 1888, the youngest son of a Galsworthian character known throughout Yorkshire as Old Joe or Holy Joe, who was soon to become a millionaire flour-miller. Brought up a strict Methodist, Arthur Rank went straight from The Leys School to apprenticeship in the flour business. It was an apprenticeship which, if that were possible, gained in severity from the fact that his father was the boss. After serving in the Army during the First World War he returned to flour—and to his Methodist faith, which had been forgotten in an earlier period of reaction. By 1928, at the age of forty, he had, according to his biographer, "accomplished nothing of particular note in life, and was still very much under the domination of his father." Ten years later he had accomplished a great deal, for he was the rising power in the British film industry. Another ten years, and he had accomplished even more. He was the head of one of the largest film combines in the world.

So much for the outline—but it raises two intriguing questions: Why? and How? What were the motives that led Mr. Rank into the film business, and how was it that within a comparatively short period of time his name to many people had come to be synonymous with the industry at large?

It is a measure of the book's success that one is able to accept the apparent paradox of Mr. Rank. To my mind at least, and I have not had the opportunity to study him at first hand as Mr. Wood obviously has, the WHY? is successfully answered. "I believe," he writes, "that Mr. Rank's religion is the key to his whole career. It is nonsense, after the way of the world's thinking, to dismiss his Methodism as a harmless eccentricity. It is no matter of minor curiosity that he should choose to spend his Sunday afternoons teaching in a Sunday School while his neighbours are playing golf; it is the explanation of most things he does in the week-days too. For let us face it; a man who sincerely believes that he is doing the will of God can do almost anything, good or bad. The famous Dr. Butler, Bishop of Bristol, told John Wesley that 'to pretend to extraordinary revelations from the Holy Ghost was a horrid thing, a very horrid thing. It can certainly be a dangerous thing,' as Rank himself told me."

Mr. Wood, you can see, is not afraid of being critical. But he is not captious about his criticism, although he has some hard things to say and says them with a nice touch of irony.

To write only of Mr. Rank, however, without describing the course of British film history in the last twenty years is to have the Prince without "Hamlet." In explaining the HOW? of the Rank Empire, Mr. Wood presents a most readable account of the perennial British film crisis. I must confess that as far as I am concerned he starts off on the right foot by stressing the fundamental importance of a unique characteristic of the film. As he puts it, "it is the only industry where increasing the geographical extent of the market does not increase the demand for the product." Or to put it another way and telescope the argument: there are no important diseconomies of scale in the expansion of film distribution, and therefore the national film industry which has the greatest primary economic advantages will tend to rule the world of films. In effect, the British film industry cannot help being at a disadvantage because of the power of Hollywood.

Although the book contains much reasoned discussion on the economic problems of film production in this country its main historical purpose is not, of course, to concentrate on this aspect of "the Seventh Art." The finances and failures of the Rank

Organisation, the "Dalton Duty," the N.F.F.C., and the British Film Production Fund all find their place; so also do the early days of the Rank film interests when G.C.F.C. was building up and Gaumont-British was reaping the bitter tares of its attack on the American market; when the financial necessities of Odeon Theatres gave Mr. Rank his first important interest in a cinema circuit. And further back there is a very skilful chapter on British films at the time when Mr. Rank was still a miller, for, writes Mr. Wood, "I do not want, most of all in this particular book, to ignore the pioneers and foster the exaggerated enthusiasm which dates the birth of British films from the arrival of Arthur Rank."

The main historical purpose as I see it—and in this I think the book succeeds admirably—is to personalise the achievements and failures of British film-makers during the past quarter-century. To give some reason for my approbation I must, in Parliamentary phrase, acknowledge an interest. When I was preparing the PEP Report on "The British Film Industry" I was conscious of the fact that "in concentrating on the men and mergers—the 'kings and battles' of film history—there has been neither space nor mood to bring these men to life and let them be seen as individual personalities . . . The industry did not develop through logic, but through the ambitions and capabilities of many men—some drab, some colourful—whose clash of aims and personalities produced the pattern of today." Mr. Rank does indeed bring these men to life, and those of the general public who would understand the world behind the screen will find much to interest them in this book. But whether they are interested in films or not they cannot fail to be impressed by Arthur Rank himself, "a man," as Mr. Wood says, "of immense simplicity and therefore a man of surprising complexity."

### PUT MONEY IN THY PURSE, A Diary of the Film of Othello, by Micheal Mac Liammoir. Illustrated. (Methuen, 15 -)

*Reviewed by James Morgan*

The main impression left two or three years after reading Cocteau's *Diary of a Film* is of a whole series of exotic illnesses and mishaps; in this diary by Micheal Mac Liammoir, the Iago of Orson Welles' *Othello*, illness is also present, but one will almost certainly remember the book first of all for its journeys—by air to Morocco, Venice, Rome, back again to the author's base at Dublin, by train across Italy, on again to North Africa . . . Throughout 1949 and well into 1950 Mac Liammoir gallantly travelled to and fro, summoned to the wrong places by cable, sent home when money for the film ran short, hastily recalled and kept waiting for a week while nothing happened. In the stationary intervals, he has produced a fascinating and remarkably good humoured personal record, concerned with people and places rather than with the creative growth of the film—which must have seemed, anyhow, remote and improbable. The whole experience seems to have taken on a dreamlike quality, with Welles, surrounded by a changing, bewildered but loyal entourage, serving as conjuror, genie, disappearing act and animator.

*Othello* was, to the onlooker, a project so obviously jinxed from the start by problems of time, distance and finance that only someone of superhuman willpower and ingenuity could have seen it through. Welles, his eyes ominously bloodshot in times of stress, mysteriously changing into a smart suit at odd intervals to go off and see a new backer, bullying, cajoling and charming on the grand scale, dominates the whole book. "His courage," Mac Liammoir acutely notes, "like everything else about him, imagination, egotism, generosity, ruthlessness, forbearance, impatience, sensitivity, grossness and vision, is magnificently out of proportion." There are also entertaining portraits of Fay Compton, calm, competent and cheery as a games mistress, of Suzanne ("Schnucks") Cloutier, last of the many potential Desdemonas—a recurring target for malice, and pinpointed by the author as the Iron Butterfly—and of exasperated, genial English and Irish actors waiting for something to happen.

Gamely, then, on watchtowers and in dungeons, suspended by rope over a clifftop in a high wind, in Turkish Baths and "all over Venice," Mac Liammoir performed and recorded. The diary combines great exuberance and malicious wit with some rather coyly facetious moments (too many capital letters, and persistent references to a close-up as a "Big Head of Pola"). But the book is always highly readable, and packed with anecdote; apart from its account of an extraordinary enterprise, it is the first detailed action study of one of the most prodigious, dazzlingly and perversely gifted film-makers of today.

## THE SOUND TRACK

The use of music in John Ford's films is by now familiar to most cinemagoers. The apparent ease with which he uses well-known tunes as primary emotional elements in the construction of his sound-tracks may suggest that this type of scoring should be more widely employed. Like Carol Reed's zither, it has, however, proved too dangerous a device to imitate, precisely because it is basically so simple; as a result, most directors apparently prefer to hide behind the shield of a hundred-piece orchestra playing music nobody knows. Using a simple tune everyone recognises means that the director assumes the tremendous responsibility of forecasting mass reactions to melody. The main argument for specially-composed scores is that the film-maker does not have to worry about individual emotional responses to music; rather does he shape the pattern to his own ends at every stage.

Ford has mastered most of the problems. To be used successfully, the tunes should not be too fragmentated or they merely annoy; his characteristic "playing-out" of a scene to the full gives the music time to establish and develop naturally. Constant interruption by dialogue and effects will destroy the continuity of the music; Ford's love of the expressive power of visuals guards against this fault. Finally, the method in which the tunes are presented demands the utmost care; Ford in this case has taken that unhappy product of Hollywood Music Departments, the orchestrator, and given him an honourable place in the dubbing theatre. *Red River Valley* is not an easy tune to use in a dramatic context; on mouth organ and concertina, it fitted admirably into *Grapes of Wrath*. *Anchors Aweigh* can be a tiresome dirge; a change of tempo and a muted brass setting made it a symbol of a special sort of courage in *They Were Expendable*. Ford is not even afraid to reminisce over a tune specially written for one of his own films if the occasion arises; when the mail wagons roll into view in *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, we hear an echo of the main theme from *Stagecoach*.

So many Irish tales have been buttered to succulence by a surfeit of Danny Boys that *The Quiet Man* perhaps offered Ford the greatest musical challenge of all. The pub scenes were carried along by *Colonial Boy*. It rarely interfered with the action, matching its tempo to scenes both dramatic and comic. A fleeting reference to *Galway Bay* came as a jarring lapse in Ford's usually impeccable taste for music. A clever orchestration of the rhythm of a tune more often associated with the Scots than the Irish (for scenes of John Wayne's walk back from Castletown) was among the best moments in the whole score. For those who wish to discover if music can recall the imagery of Ford's films, there is a gramophone record of Farrelly's rich melody *Isle of Innisfree*, played by Norrie Paramor and His Orchestra in a style similar to the original track. (Columbia DB3128). Perhaps some day an enterprising concern will assemble all the major orchestrations commissioned by Ford for his pictures; they will be among the finest examples of "theme-and-variations" in the field of incidental music.

JOHN HUNTLEY.

## CORRESPONDENCE

John Garfield

*The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND*

Sir,—It seems to me that your "obit" on the actor, John Garfield (*SIGHT AND SOUND* July/September), was both perfunctory and misleading. If unacquainted with recent political developments in the United States, one might have received the impression from your article that Mr. Garfield passed away peacefully and of natural causes. While this may be true in the pathological sense, it by no means corresponds with the facts of his death.

To say that Garfield was struck down by McCarthyism and the current American red hunt would, I think, perhaps overly dramatise his death but would accord more accurately with reality. The point is, there was a direct causal relationship between Garfield's involvement in social and political movements and his subsequent and untimely end. Both conservative and liberal newspapers here have reported that, as a result of the witch hunt, Garfield had been denied employment in Hollywood. Blacklisted is the word. For their own reasons, these newspapers went to a great deal of leg-work effort to dig up Garfield's friends who were quoted as stating that the actor was extremely distressed and depressed over the manner in which he had been treated by both the committees in Washington and his own studio. According to the Hearst chain,

Garfield prior to his demise was prepared to "co-operate" with the Communist chasers. At one committee hearing he had already denounced Communists and communism in general, and stoutly denied ever joining the party, but just before he collapsed rumours were strong in Hollywood that perjury charges were being sought against him. As you have pointed out in your article, Garfield was a man keenly sensitive to his social environment. With these facts in mind, I think we would be safe in assuming that his death, at least in part, was caused by persecution. In this same manner, Mady Christians, Canada Lee and J. Edward Bromberg were killed.

True, your magazine is not devoted to political comment. But it does seem to me that you could have honoured Mr. Garfield's memory in a somewhat more relevant fashion by mentioning the circumstances of his death. Hoping that the English cinema never learns to live on its knees, as ours has, I am

Sincerely,

C. CLANCY.

42 W. 87th,  
New York City.

## Dieterle and Hollywood

*The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND*

Sir,—William Dieterle's article on Europeans in Hollywood (*SIGHT AND SOUND*—July/September) is most interesting but contains some questionable opinions.

Does he really believe that to give a producer power to change the script, to veto the director's interpretation and to control the editing is conducive to obtaining the best work from a truly individual and creative artist? Such despotic methods can only lead to frustration and have been directly responsible for the near-ruination of many a film that might otherwise have been outstanding. One recalls the recent *African Queen* as a case in point.

Further, to suggest that, when making a film, the European director should constantly keep in mind the international audience is sheer nonsense. A film should accurately reflect its country of origin and thus help the people of other nations to a better understanding of that country. If Hollywood film-makers are so concerned with this international audience then that would seem to explain why so few of their films convey a true impression of the American way of life. Fortunately not all American producers are obsessed with this idea otherwise we should not have had such a film as Capra's *The World and His Wife* (*State of the Union*)—which was not widely appreciated or understood here because of its subject—American politics. For the intelligent, though, it was the opportunity to learn.

Perhaps Dieterle has found his way through the Hollywood machine to the means of "pure creative expression" (although one awaits evidence of this) but it is hardly fair to expect the Continental to do the same. The American and the European are dissimilar in temperament to the point of complete incompatibility and the moral to be learned from the resulting disillusionment of those who made the return journey to Hollywood is that directors should, as a general rule, confine themselves to their native country where, at least, they have, or one hopes they have, an intuitive understanding of place and people.

Yours faithfully,

GEOFFREY ATKINS.

5, Birch Avenue,  
Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire.

## The Top Ten

*The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND*

Sir,—Gavin Lambert is ". . . struck by the relative indifference . . . to *Le Jour se Lève*" (compared with *Les Enfants du Paradis*). (*SIGHT AND SOUND*, July/September). There is nothing new in this. In an old (1946) edition of the Penguin FILM, I learn from Dr. Mancell that, "*La Grande Illusion* (and) *Les Enfants du Paradis* . . . for characterisation and feeling are at the top of French cinema." In the 1950 edition this becomes, surprisingly, "*La Grande Illusion* and *Le Jour se Lève* . . ."

One cannot help feeling that the present-day reputation of the earlier film owes much to its extraordinary history. If *Les Enfants* had been so treated (with Danny Kaye as Baptiste?) its prestige among many critics would, I suggest, now be at least as high.

Yours faithfully,

London, W.C.1.

S. H. HAROLD.

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The man himself was little known. The author, a friend of Eisenstein, seeks to penetrate beneath the surface of this complex and remarkable man; a genius, born and conditioned by the old Russia, who aimed to become a new man representative of a new society. She has had full access to much of Eisenstein's personal correspondence and has included in the book a large amount of previously unpublished material.

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(THE CINEMA AS A MORAL LEVELLER continued from page 66)

popular notions of science and art will keep it in the front rank of culture. Ragtimes are more moral than Beethoven's Symphonies; *The Marriage of Kitty* is more moral than any masterpiece of Euripides or Ibsen; Millais is more moral than Mantegna; that is why there is comparatively no money in Beethoven and Ibsen and Mantegna. The London boy can hear a little Beethoven occasionally from an L.C.C. band, and may see Mantegna's work in the National Gallery. Ibsen is to be heard cheaply (in Yiddish) at the Pavilion Theatre in Whitechapel. But the nameless exponents of a world-wide vulgarity (vulgarity is another of the names of morality) have complete possession of the cinema.

Already there is a cry, if not a very loud one, for educational films, meaning, as far as my experience goes, something ending with a fight between an octopus and a lobster. I suggest that what is wanted is the endowment, either public or private, of a cinema theatre devoted wholly to the castigation by ridicule of current morality. Otherwise the next generation of Englishmen will no longer be English: they will represent a world-average of character and conduct, which means that they will have rather less virtue than is needed to run Lapland. I shall be happy to contribute a few sample scenarios.

(PLAY INTO PICTURE continued from page 84)

time the sets were built and dressed, and I could rehearse the script in continuity with the whole cast and the key members of the technical crew. As the picture began to take more concrete shape I had the wonderful—and in pictures, most unusual—experience of getting the first glimpse of an audience reaction from the crew, as they followed the unfolding of the story with growing interest. Imagine my great pleasure when one day the chief electrician and the head grip asked me (and this is something I've never heard to happen) to let them read the script!

The picture was shot in 26 days. (The schedule was 25. I "went over" by one day). The difficulties of such a short schedule, on a picture as dramatic and technically as complicated as *Salesman*, are obvious. But I found some surprising advantages, too. Partly in the heightened intensity and excitement in everyone's work that comes from the feeling of "this is it," (as there could not be many takes), and also in the

enforced concentration on essentials at the expense of small nuances (the opposite often happening after many repeated takes).

With the exception of one single shot, re-taken for technical reasons, there are no re-takes in the picture. I confess that, once I saw the picture put together, I'd have liked to go back to "fix up" a few things that one always knows better by hindsight. Unfortunately, this was not possible.

The first cut of the picture ran, if I remember correctly, about 120 minutes. The finished film runs 115. The play lasted approximately two and a half hours, not counting the intermission.

Actual production, from the start of rehearsals to the first finished print, took 14 weeks.

For us who had a share in making *Death of a Salesman* it was a unique experience. For all of us, it was the most unusual thing in making motion pictures: a labour of love.

(THE EROTIC CINEMA continued from page 74)

longheld close-up of Hedy Lamarr's face in the throes of actual sexual ecstasy has never again been even approached in a commercial film. The constant flow of symbolic imagery, the visual strength of the narrative with its sensuous landscapes, and the very real, tender and honest feeling with which the film is imbued, make it an exceptional work in the history of the cinema. (Lamarr, incidentally, has never since exuded anything but sexual coldness on the screen). Earlier, Machaty had made the silent *Erotikon* (1929), which contains some interesting sequences, although it is not so assured, nor so rich as the later film. Both have very simple triangle stories, few plot incidents, and a close integration between the lovers and their backgrounds: in *Erotikon* the rather menacing railway station where the lovers meet, in *Extase* the luxuriant countryside. Machaty's later Hollywood work, *Within the Law* (1939) and *Jealousy* (1947) are both "B" pictures of little interest. No doubt censorship and commercial restrictions have something to do with this.

Today, in fact, nearly all true eroticism must be sought for in European or Eastern films (*Rashomon* had remarkable qualities in this respect). Since 1934 Hollywood censorship has restricted the subject matter of its own films to such an extent that they are almost inevitably emasculated. It is doubtful whether, for instance, Lubitsch—whose talent had begun to decline in the later 30's—could have made his best comedies of amorous intrigues, *Forbidden Paradise*, *So This is Paris*, *One Hour with You*, *Trouble in Paradise*, the wittiest

of their kind produced in America, after the rise of the Legion of Decency. (Today the tradition is carried on in Europe with *La Ronde*). His later films gradually narrowed down to double entendres and spicy allusions. Other Hollywood film makers have, like Lubitsch, evolved a certain facility in suggestion, but this kind of underhandness is necessarily both very limited and limiting. Most of Stroheim's *The Merry Widow* would be impossible in present day Hollywood; Sternberg, being more subtly perverse, might achieve more if he could find a sympathetic producer, but even he could no longer have Dietrich, as in *Morocco* (1930), after singing a song costumed in a man's full dress suit, go up to a young lady among her spectators and, with a masculine bravado, bend down and kiss her on the lips.

I suspect that no survey of the erotic cinema should be complete without mentioning the "blue" film. The question can always be argued as to whether the pornographic can be art, but much of the art product of earlier civilizations suggests that it can be and is. It has been rumoured that the famous Doctor Kinsey, among the large collection of pornographica he has amassed as part of his researches, has discovered a number of pornographic motion pictures, including such a rarity as a full-length feature made for the private delight of an Indian Maharajah. A survey of these might be infinitely revealing; though perhaps it is as well that the secret films of the world remain secret.

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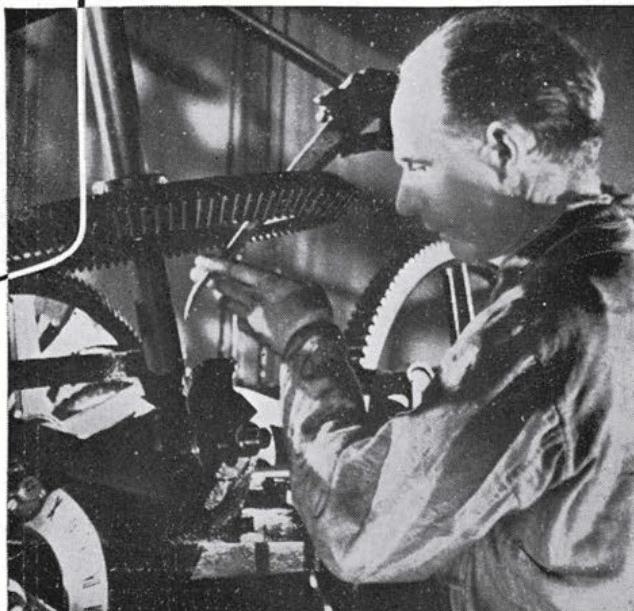
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